

THE
CONQUEST OF FLORIDA.

THE
CONQUEST, OF FLORIDA,

UNDER
HERNANDO DE SOTO.

BY THEODORE IRVING

Son quattromila, e bene armati e bene
Istrutti, usi al disagio e tolleranti.
Buona è la gente, e non può da più dotta
O da più forte guida esser condotta.— *Tasso*.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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DEDICATION.

TO WASHINGTON IRVING, ESQ.

MY DEAR UNCLE,

I KNOW of no person to whom I can with more propriety dedicate the following pages than to yourself, since they were written at your suggestion, and the materials of which they are composed were moulded into their present form and feature under your affectionate and judicious advice.

Often, in the course of my labours, when I have been dismayed by unlooked for difficulties, and disheartened by those misgivings which beset an inexperienced writer, you have dispelled my doubts, cheered my faltering spirit, and encouraged me to persevere.

I would be pardoned for alluding to other and greater obligations yet nearer to my heart. With the anxious interest of a parent, you have watched over the most critical period of my life. Amid the excitement and snares of foreign scenes, and in the quiet employments of our home, your counsel has been my guide—your friendship—the circumstances will excuse the term from one so much your junior—your friendship my happiness and pride. The heedlessness of boyhood could not arrest your assiduous care—the wayward habits of youth have not wearied your unceasing solicitude. That I have been thus far led in safety, claims the fervent gratitude of

Your affectionate nephew,

THEODORE IRVING.

New York, March, 1835.

P R E F A C E.

WHILE studying the Spanish language, some few years since, at Madrid, an old chronicle was placed in my hands, relating to the early discoveries and achievements of the Spaniards in America. It was denominated "The Florida of the Inca, or the History of the Adelantado, Hernando de Soto, Governor and Captain-General of the Kingdom of Florida, and of other heroic cavaliers, Spaniards and Indians: written by the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega." As I read, I became insensibly engrossed by the extraordinary enterprise therein narrated. I dwelt with intense interest upon the hair-brained adventures and daring exploits of steel-clad warriors, and the no less valiant and chivalrous deeds of savage chieftains, which entitle this narrative to the high praise bestowed upon

it by Mr. Southey, of being one of the most delightful works in the Spanish language.

At a subsequent period, I was advised to undertake a free translation of it into English, as a literary exercise. While occupied in this task, I had the good fortune to meet with a narrative on the same subject, written by a Portuguese soldier, who was present in the expedition. This led me to further research and closer examination; and, finding that the striking events and perilous adventures in the chronicle of the Inca, were borne out, in the main, by this narrative from another hand, and that various lights had been thrown by modern travellers upon the line of march, said to have been pursued by the adventurous band of De Soto, I was convinced, that what I had before regarded almost as a work of fiction, was an authentic, though, perhaps, occasionally exaggerated history.

Deeming, therefore, that a full account of an expedition which throws such an air of romance over the early history of a portion of our country, would possess interest in the eyes of my countrymen, I resolved, to the best of my abilities, to digest a work from the materials before me.

The two main sources from which I have derived my facts, are the narratives already mentioned, by the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, and by the anonymous Portuguese adventurer. The former I have consulted in a folio edition, printed at Madrid, in 1723, and in the history of the Indias, by Herrera, in which it is incorporated almost at full length. The Portuguese narrative I have found in an English translation, published in London, in 1686, and in an abridgment in Purchas' Pilgrims.

It has been the fashion, in latter days, to distrust the narrative of the Inca, and to put more faith in that of the Portuguese. This has occasionally been done without due examination into their respective claims to credibility. Garcilaso de la Vega was a man of rank and honour. He was descended from an ancient Spanish stock by the father's side, while by the mother's, he was of the lofty Peruvian line of the Incas. His narrative was originally taken by himself, from the lips of a friend; a cavalier of worth and respectability, who had been an officer under De Soto, and for whose probity we have the word of the Inca as a guarantee. It was authenticated and enriched by the written journals or memorandums of two

other soldiers, who had served in the expedition. He had the testimony, therefore, of three eye witnesses.

The Portuguese narrative, on the other hand, is the evidence of merely a single eye witness, who represents himself as a cavalier, or gentleman; but for this we have merely his own word, and he is anonymous. There is nothing intrinsic in his work that should entitle it to the exclusive belief which has been claimed for it. It agrees with the narrative of the Inca, as to the leading facts which form the frame-work of the story: it differs from it occasionally, as to the plans and views of Hernando de Soto; but here the Inca is most to be depended upon—the Spanish cavalier from whom he derived his principal information, being more likely to be admitted to the intimate councils of his commander than one of a different nation, besides being free from the tinge of national jealousy which may have influenced the statements of the Portuguese.

The narrative of the Portuguese is more meagre and concise than that of Garcilaso; omitting a thousand interesting anecdotes and personal adventures; but this does not increase its credibility. A multitude of facts, gathered

from three different persons, may easily have escaped the knowledge, or have failed to excite the attention of a solitary individual. These anecdotes are not the less credible because they were striking and extraordinary. The whole expedition was daring and extravagant, and those concerned in it, were men who delighted in adventure and exploit.*

I have been induced, therefore, in the following pages, to draw my facts more freely and copiously than others, in latter days, have seemed inclined to do, from the work of the Inca; still I have scrupulously and diligently collated the two narratives, endeavouring to reconcile them where they disagreed, to ascertain, with strict impartiality, which was most likely to be correct, where they materially varied, and to throw upon the whole subject the scattered lights furnished by various modern investigators. While I have discarded many incidents which appeared hyperbolical, or savoured too strongly of the gossip of an idle soldiery, I have retained, as much as possible,

* The reader will find a note concerning Garcilaso de la Vega and his work in the Appendix.

those every day and familiar anecdotes which give so lively a picture of the characters, habits, persons and manners of the Spanish discoverers of those days, and to my mind, bear so strongly the impress of truth and of nature. My great object has been to present a clear, connected, and characteristic narrative of this singular expedition : how far I have succeeded, it is for the public to judge.

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CHAPTER I.

First discovery of Florida.

NEVER was the spirit of wild adventure more universally diffused than at the dawn of the sixteenth century. The wonderful discoveries made by Columbus and his hardy companions, the descriptions of the beautiful summer isles of the west, and the tales of unexplored regions of wealth locked up in unbounded wildernesses, had an effect upon the imaginations of the young and the adventurous, not unlike the preaching of the chivalric crusades for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. The gallant knight, the servile retainer, the soldier of fortune, the hooded friar, the pains-taking mechanic, the industrious hus-

bandman, the loose profligate, and the hardy mariner,—all were touched with the pervading passion ; all left their home, country, friends, wives, children, loves, to seek some imaginary Eldorado, confidently expecting to return with countless treasure.

Of the enterprises undertaken in this spirit, none has surpassed, in hardihood and variety of incident, that of the renowned Hernando de Soto and his band of cavaliers. It was poetry put into action ; it was the knight-errantry of the old world carried into the depths of the American wilderness. Indeed, the personal adventures, the feats of individual prowess, the picturesque descriptions of steel-clad cavaliers, with lance and helm and prancing steed, glittering through the wilds of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and the prairies of the Far West, would seem the mere fictions of romance, did they not come to us recorded in matter-of-fact narratives of contemporaries, and corroborated by the minute and daily memoranda of eye-witnesses.

Before we enter, however, upon the stirring and eventful narrative of the fortunes of De Soto and his followers, it is proper to notice briefly the discovery of the land which was the scene

of his adventures, and the various expeditions which stimulated him to his great enterprise.

Those who are conversant with the history of Spanish discoveries, will remember the chimerical cruise of the brave old Governor of Porto Rico, Ponce de Leon, in search of the Fountain of Youth. This fabled fountain, according to Indian tradition, existed in one of the Bahama Islands. Ponce de Leon sought it in vain; but in the course of his cruising discovered a country of unknown extent, to which, from the abundance of its flowers, and from its being first seen on Palm Sunday, (Pascha Florida) he gave the name of Florida.

Obtaining permission from the Spanish government to subjugate and govern this country, he made a second voyage to its shores, but was mortally wounded in a conflict with the natives. Such was the fate of the first adventurer into the regions of Florida, and he seems to have bequeathed his ill fortune to his successors.

A few years after his defeat, a captain of a caravel, named Diego Miruelo, was driven to the coast of Florida by stress of weather, where he obtained a small quantity of silver and gold in traffic from the natives. With this he returned well pleased to San Domingo,

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spreading the fame of the country he had visited. About the same time a company of several wealthy men at San Domingo, concerned in gold mines, at the head of which was the Licentiate Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon, auditor and judge of appeals in that island, fitted out two vessels to cruise among the islands and entrap Indians to work in the mines. In the course of this cruise the vessels were driven by stress of weather to a cape on the eastern coast, to which their crews gave the name of St. Helena. The country in the neighbourhood was called Chicorea, and is the same now called South Carolina. They anchored at the mouth of a river which they called the Jordan, after the name of the captain who discovered it. It is the same now known by the Indian appellation of Cambahec.* The natives hastened to the shores at sight of the ships, which they mistook for huge sea monsters; but, when they beheld men issue from them, with white complexions

* We follow the general opinion, strengthened by the circumstance that the neighbouring sound and island are still called St. Helena. Herrera places Cape St. Helena and the river Jordan in the thirty-second degree of latitude, which is that of the Savannah river.—*Vide Herrera, D. 2. lib. X. c. 6.*

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and beards, clad in raiment and shining armour, they fled in terror.

The Spaniards having dispelled their fears, a friendly intercourse took place. The Indians were kind and hospitable, brought provisions to the ships and made the strangers presents of martin skins, pearls, together with a small quantity of gold and silver. The Spaniards gave them trinkets in return, and, having completed their supplies of wood, water and provisions, invited their savage friends on board their ships. These latter eagerly accepted the invitation. They thronged the vessels, gazing with wonder at every thing around them; but when a sufficient number were below the decks, the Spaniards perfidiously closed the hatches upon them, and, weighing anchor, made sail for San Domingo. One of the ships was lost in the course of the voyage; the other arrived safe, but the Indians on board remaining sullen and gloomy, and refusing food, most of them perished.*

The reports, however, brought back by the kidnappers, of the country they had visited,

* Hist. Florida por el Inca. L. 1. c. 2. Herrera. D. 2.
L. x. c. 6.

and the specimens of gold and silver brought home about the same time by Diego Miruelo, roused the cupidity of the auditor Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon. Being shortly afterwards in Spain, he obtained from the Emperor Charles V, permission to conquer and govern the newly discovered province of Chicorea. With this permission he returned to San Domingo, and fitted out an armament of three large vessels, embarking personally in the enterprise.

Diego Miruelo persuaded him first to steer in quest of the country which the former had already visited, and which he represented as much richer than Chicorea. Miruelo accompanied the expedition as pilot, but, with a want of foresight altogether unworthy of a practised mariner, having neglected in his first visit to take an observation, he was unable to find the place at which he had formerly landed, and was so much mortified by the ridicule and reproaches of his employers, that he fell into a profound melancholy, lost his senses, and died in the course of a few days.

Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon now prosecuted his voyage to the eastward in search of Chicorea. Arriving in the river Jordan, (or Camba-

hee)—the scene of perfidy acted during the preceding voyage—his principal ship stranded and was lost. With the remaining two he passed further to the eastward, and landed on the coast adjoining Chicorca, in a gentle and pleasant region. Here he was so well received that he considered the country already under his dominion, and permitted two hundred of his men to visit the principal village, about three leagues in the interior, while he remained with a small force to protect the ships.

The inhabitants of the village entertained these visitors with feasting for three days, until having put them completely off their guard, they rose upon them in the night and massacred every soul. They then repaired by daybreak to the harbour, and surprised Vasquez de Ayllon and his handful of guards. The few who survived escaped wounded and dismayed to their ships, and making all sail from the fatal shore, hastened back to San Domingo. According to some accounts, Ayllon remained among the slain on the coast he sought to subjugate, but others assert that he returned wounded to San Domingo, where the humiliation of his defeat and the ruin of his fortune, conspired with his bodily sufferings to

hurry him broken-hearted to the grave. Thus signally did the natives of Chicorea revenge the wrongs of their people who had been so perfidiously kidnapped.*

* Hist. Florida, por el Inca. L. 1. c. 2. Herrera. D. 2. L. x. c. 6. Idem. D. iii. lib. 8. c. 8. Peter Martyr. D. vii. c. 11. Heylyn's Cosmographie. L. 4. p. 100. Lond. Ed. 1669.

CHAPTER II.

The Expedition of Pamphilo de Narvaez.

THE next person who aspired to subjugate the unknown realms of Florida, was a cavalier of greater note, the brave but ill-starred Pamphilo de Narvaez, who had endcavoured to arrest Hernando Cortes in his victorious career against Mexico, in which attempt, Narvaez was defeated, and lost an eye. Possessing favour at court, he was enabled to fit out a considerable armament for his new enterprise. He was invested by the Emperor Charles V with the title of Adelantado, or military governor of the country he expected to occupy, which was that part of Florida extending from its extreme cape to the river of Palms. In this expedition he trusted to wipe off the disgrace of his late defeat, and even to

acquire a reputation which might vie with that of Cortes.

On the 12th of April, 1528, Narvaez anchored at the mouth of an open bay on the eastern coast of Florida, with a squadron of four barques and a brigantine. Here he landed his forces, consisting of four hundred men, and forty-five horses ; having lost many of the former by desertion in the West India islands, and several of the latter in a storm.

Erecting the royal standard, he took possession of the country for the crown of Spain, without opposition from the natives. After having explored the vicinity, Narvaez determined to penetrate the country in a northerly direction, hoping to discover some great empire like that of Mexico or Peru. Meanwhile the ships were to proceed along the coast in quest of some convenient harbour where, if they discovered such, he ordered that they should either await his arrival, or steer for Havana, and return with supplies for the army.*

This plan was strongly opposed by the treasurer of the expedition, one Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, a prudent and sagacious man.

* Herrera, Decad. iv. L. iv. c. 4.

He represented the danger of plunging into an unknown wilderness without knowing a word of the language, and advised, rather, that they should continue in their ships, until they found a secure harbour and a fertile country, whence they might make incursions into the interior.

This advice was slighted by Narvaez and his adventurous companions, whose imaginations were inflamed with the idea of inland conquest. The squadron accordingly sailed to the northward ; Narvaez and his troops setting out by land in the same direction, accompanied by the faithful Alvar Nuñez, who, since he could not dissuade his commander from his desperate course, resolved to share his fate.

The force which proceeded by land consisted of three hundred men, forty of whom were mounted on horses. The allowance to each man consisted of two pounds of biscuit and half a pound of bacon. For the first few days they met with fields of maize, and villages containing provisions. Here, however, they outraged the feelings of the natives by rifling their sepulchres, mistaking them for idolatrous temples. They afterwards journeyed many days through desert solitudes, where there was

neither house nor inhabitant, suffering greatly from want of food. They crossed rapid rivers on rafts or by swimming, continually exposed to the assaults of hordes of lurking savages. They traversed swamps and forests, making their way with great difficulty through thickets encumbered by fallen trees, and suffering every variety of hardship.

Still they were cheered onward by the assurances of certain captives who served as guides, that at some distance before them lay a vast province called Apalachee, extremely fertile, and abounding in the gold they so cagerly sought after.

At length they arrived in sight of the place which gave its name to this long desired province. Narvaez had pictured to himself a second Mexico, and was chagrined at finding a mere village of two hundred and forty houses. Alvar Nuñez was sent forward to take possession, which he did without opposition, the inhabitants having all fled to the woods.

The Spaniards remained twenty-five days in the village, exploring the neighbouring country, and subsisting upon the provisions they found in the place. During this time they were harassed, day and night, by the natives, who

proved to be an exceedingly warlike people, besides being disappointed in their hopes of finding gold, and discouraged by accounts of the country farther on. They were told, however, that by shaping their course to the southward, towards the sea, after nine days' journey, they would come to the village of Aute, where maize, vegetables and fish would be found in abundance, and where the natives were of a friendly disposition.

Towards Aute, therefore, they turned their steps, more eager now for food than for gold. The journey was perilous and full of disaster. They had to cross deep lagoons, and dangerous swamps, the water often up to their breasts, their passage obstructed by rotten trees, and beset by hordes of savages. These latter appeared to the disheartened Spaniards of gigantic stature; they had bows of an enormous size, from which they discharged arrows with such force as to penetrate armour at the distance of two hundred yards. At length, after incredible hardships, and with the loss of many men and horses, the adventurers arrived at the village of Aute.*

* Supposed to be on what is now called the Bay of St. Marks.

The natives abandoned and burnt their houses as the invaders approached ; but left behind a quantity of maize, with which the Spaniards appeased their hunger.

A day's march beyond the village brought them to a river which gradually expanded into a large estuary. Here they came to a pause in their perilous career, and held a consultation as to their future movements. Their hopes of wealth and conquest were at an end. Nearly a third of their original number had perished ; while of the survivors a great majority were ill, and disease was daily spreading among them. To attempt to retrace their steps, or to proceed along the coast in search of the fleet would be to hazard the lives of all. At length it was suggested that they should construct small barks, launch them and keep along the coast until they should reach their ships. This was a forlorn hope, but they caught at it like desperate men. They accordingly set to work with great eagerness. One of them constructed a pair of bellows out of deer skins, to which he applied a wooden pipe. Others made charcoal, and a forge. By the aid of these, they soon turned their stirrups, spurs, cross-bows, and other articles

of iron, into nails, saws, and hatchets. The tails and manes of their horses twisted with the fibres of the palm tree, served for rigging ; the men's shirts cut open and sewed together furnished sails ; the fibrous part of the palm was also used as oakum, the resin of the pine for tar ; the skins of horses were made into vessels to contain fresh water ; and a quantity of maize was won by hard fighting from the natives. A horse was killed every three days to furnish provisions for the labourers and for the sick. Having at length by great exertions completed five frail vessels, the Spaniards embarked on the 22d of September, each vessel containing from forty to fifty persons, but so closely crowded, that there was scarcely room to move, whilst the gunwales of these fragile barks, were forced down to the water's edge.

Setting sail from this bay, which they called the Bay of Caballos, and continuing their course for several days, they reached an island, where they secured five canoes that had been deserted by the Indians. These being attached to their vessels enabled them to sail with greater comfort. Passing through the strait between the island and the main land, which they called the Strait of San Miguel, they

sailed onward for many days, enduring all the torments of hunger and thirst. The skins which contained their fresh water having burst, some of the men, driven to desperation, drank salt water, and died miserably. Their sufferings too were aggravated by a fearful storm. At length they approached a more populous and fertile part of the coast, upon which they occasionally landed to procure provisions, and were immediately involved in fatal affrays with the natives. Thus harassed by sea and land, famishing with hunger, their barks scattered and scarcely manageable, these unfortunate wanderers lost all presence of mind, and became wild and desperate. They were again driven out to sea, and scattered during a stormy night. At daybreak three of these tempest-tossed vessels rejoined each other. In one, which was the best manned and the best sailer, was Pamphilo de Narvaez. Alvar Nuñez, who had command of another, seeing the Adelantado making towards the land, called upon him for aid. Narvaez replied that it was no longer time to assist others, but that every one must take care of himself. He then steered towards the shore, and left Alvar Nuñez to make the best of his way with the other bark.

After sailing along the coast for many days, one night Narvaez anchored off the land. All his crew had gone on shore for provisions, except one sailor and a page who was sick. A violent gale springing up from the north, the vessel, in which was neither food nor water, was driven out to sea, and no tidings were ever after heard of her. Thus perished the ill-fated Pamphilo de Narvaez.

The only survivors of this disastrous expedition were Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, and four of his companions. After the most singular and unparalleled hardships, they traversed the northern parts of Florida, crossed the Mississippi, the desert and mountainous regions on the confines of Texas and the Rocky Mountains, passing from tribe to tribe of Indians, oftentimes as slaves, until, at the expiration of several years, they succeeded in reaching the Spanish settlement of Compostella. From thence Alvar Nuñez proceeded to Mexico, and ultimately arrived at Lisbon in 1537; nearly ten years after his embarkation with Pamphilo de Narvaez.*

* This chapter is chiefly taken from the "Naufragios de Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca," with occasional references to Herrera.

CHAPTER III.

Hernando de Soto—His birth—Adventures in Peru—
Fits out an armament for Florida—Touches at the
Canary Islands—Arrival at Cuba.

ONE would have thought that after the melancholy result of these sad enterprises, and others of less note, but equally unfortunate, the coast of Florida would have been avoided as a fated land. The Spanish discoverers, however, were not to be deterred by difficulties and dangers, and the accounts which they heard of the vast extent of this unknown country and of opulent regions in its interior, served only as a stimulus to still bolder and more extensive enterprises.

It is proper to note that the Spaniards, at this period, had a very vague idea of the country called Florida, and by no means limited it

to its present boundaries. They knew something of the maritime border of the peninsula, but Florida, according to their notions, extended far beyond, embracing the confines of Mexico in one direction, the banks of Newfoundland in another, and expanding into a vast Terra Incognita to the north.

The accounts brought to Europe by Alvar Nuñez of the expedition of Pamphilo de Narvaez contributed to promote this idea. It was supposed that this unfortunate cavalier, in his extensive march, had but skirted the borders of immense internal empires, which might rival in opulence and barbaric splendour, the recently discovered kingdoms of Mexico and Peru ; and there was not wanting a bold and ambitious spirit to grasp immediately at the palm of conquest.

The candidate who now presented himself to undertake the subjugation of Florida was Hernando de Soto, and as his expedition is the subject of the following pages, it is proper that he should be introduced particularly to the reader. Hernando de Soto was born about the year 1501, in Villa Nueva de Barcarota,*

* The Portuguese narrator assigns Xeres de Badajos as

and was of the old Spanish hidalguia, or gentry, for we are assured by one of his biographers that "he was a gentleman by all four descents,"—that is to say, the parents both of his father and mother were of gentle blood ; a pedigree, which, according to the rules of Spanish heraldry, entitled him to admission into the noble order of Santiago.

Whatever might be the dignity of his birth, however, he began his career a mere soldier of fortune. All his estate, says his Portuguese historian, was but a sword and buckler. He accompanied Pedrarias Davila,* when the latter went to America to assume the command of Terra Firma. The merits of De Soto soon gained him favour in the eye of Pedrarias, who gave him the command of a troop of horse : with these he followed Pizarro in his successful expedition into Peru. Here he quickly signalized himself by a rare combination of prudence and valour. He was excellent in council, yet foremost in every perilous exploit ; not recklessly seeking danger for its own sake, or

the birth-place of De Soto ; we follow, however, the authority of the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega. Herrera. Hist. Ind. Dec. VI. L. 7. c. 9. agrees with the Inca.

* Properly written Pedro Arias de Avila,

from a vain thirst of notoriety, but bravely putting every thing to the hazard where any important point was to be gained by intrepidity.

Pizarro soon singled him out from the hardy spirits around him, and appointed him his lieutenant.* If there was a service of especial danger to be performed, it was invariably entrusted to De Soto :—if there was an enterprise requiring sound judgment and fearless daring, De Soto was sure to be called upon. A master at all weapons, and a complete horseman, his prowess and dexterity were the admiration of the Spanish soldiery. They declared that his lance alone was equal to any ten in the army ; and that in the management of this chivalrous weapon, he was second only to Pizarro.

He was sent by that commander on the first embassy to the renowned but ill fated Inca Atahualpa, whose subjects, we are told, were filled with surprise and admiration on beholding his wonderful feats of horsemanship.†

* Herrera Hist. Ind. Decad. V. L. ii. c. 2.

† Herrera. Hist. Ind. Decad. V. L. 3. c. 10. says, Hernando de Soto sprang upon his horse, and, aware that

He afterwards commanded one of the squadrons of horse that captured this unfortunate Inca and routed his army of warriors.* He led the way with a band of seventy horsemen, to the discovery and subjugation of the great province of Cusco, in which he distinguished himself by the most daring and romantic achievements.† We might trace him throughout the whole history of the Peruvian conquest by a series of perilous encounters and marvellous escapes, but our purpose is only to state briefly the circumstances which directed his ambition into the career of conquest, and ele-

the eyes of the Inca were upon him, caused it to curvet, caracole and leap, and striking his spurs into its flanks, dashed up so near to the savage Prince, that he felt the very breath of the snorting animal. The haughty Inca was as serene and unmoved as if he had been accustomed all his life to the charge of a horse. Many of the Indians, however, fled in terror. Atahualpa immediately ordered the fugitives to appear before him, and sternly upbraiding them with their cowardice, ordered them all to be put to death for having behaved so dastardly in the royal presence.

* Vega. Com. de Peru. L. 1. c. 21. Herrera D. V. L. 2. c. 11.

† Herrera, Dec. V. L. 4. c. x. and Mo. 5. c. 2. 3.

vated him to the notice of his sovereign, and of all contemporary cavaliers of enterprising spirit.

Hernando de Soto returned to Spain with the spoils of the new world ; his share of the treasures of Atahualpa having amounted, it is said, to the enormous sum of a hundred and eighty thousand crowns of gold. He now assumed great state, and appeared at Valladolid, at the court of the Emperor Charles V, with extraordinary magnificence, having his steward, his major-domo, his master of horse, his pages, lacqueys, and all other household officers who in those ostentatious days, swelled the retinue of a Spanish nobleman. He was accompanied by a knot of brave cavaliers, all evidently bent on pushing their fortunes at court. Some of them had been his brothers in arms during the conquest of Peru, and had returned with their purses filled with Peruvian gold, which they expended in a style of military liberality upon horses, arms, and "rich array." Two or three of them deserve particular notice, as they will be found to figure conspicuously in the course of this narrative.

Nuño Toban, a native of Xeres de Badajos, was a young cavalier of gallant bearing, of great

valour, and romantic generosity. Another, Luis de Moscoso de Alvarado, likewise of Xeres, had signalized himself during his campaigns in the new world. A third, Juan de Añasco, was a native of Seville. He had not been in Peru, but while equal to the others in bravery, he was likewise noted for nautical skill and a profound knowledge of cosmography and astronomy.

The world was at that time resounding with the recent conquest of Peru. The appearance at court of one of the conquerors, thus brilliantly attended, could not fail to attract attention. The personal qualifications of De Soto corresponded with his fame. He was in the prime of manhood,* being about thirty-six years old, of a commanding stature, above the middle size, with a dark, animated, and expressive countenance. With such advantages of person and reputation, he soon succeeded in gaining the affections and the hand of a lady of distinguished rank, Isabella de Bobadilla, daughter to Pedrarias Davila, Count of Puño en Rostro. This marriage, connecting him with a powerful family, had a great effect in strengthening his influence at court.*

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 1.

De Soto might now have purchased estates, and passed the remainder of his days opulently and honourably in his native land, in the bosom of his connexions, but he was excited by the remembrance of past adventures, and eager for further distinction. Just at this juncture, Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca returned to Spain with tidings of the fate of Pamphilo de Narvaez and his followers. His tale, it is ~~true~~ true, was one of hardships and disasters, but it turned the thoughts of adventurous men to the vast and unexplored interior of Florida. It is said that Alvar Nuñez, when questioned as to whether there was any gold in the country he had visited, observed much reserve and mystery in his replies;—that he talked of asking permission of the crown to return there and prosecute further discoveries, and that he had even sworn his fellow survivors to secrecy upon all points connected with their discoveries, lest others should be induced to interfere with his prospects.*

The imagination of De Soto took fire at the narrative of Alvar Nuñez. He doubted not that there existed in the interior of Florida

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 2.

regions of wealth, equalling, if not exceeding, Mexico and Peru. He had hitherto only followed in the course of conquest; an opportunity now presented itself of rivalling the fame of Cortes and Pizarro; his reputation, his wealth, his past services, and his matrimonial connexions—all gave him the means of trying the chances before him. With the magnificent spirit of a Spanish cavalier, he asked permission of the Emperor to undertake the conquest of Florida at his own expense.

His prayer was readily granted. The Emperor conferred on him the title of Adelantado, which combines military and civil command, and a Marquisite, with an estate thirty leagues in length and fifteen in breadth, in any part of the country he might discover. He, moreover, created him for life, Governor and Captain-General of Florida, as well as of the island of Cuba. The command of this island had been annexed at the especial request of De Soto, as he knew it would be important for him to have complete control over it, in order that he might thus be enabled to fit out and supply his armaments for the meditated conquest.

No sooner were the wishes of De Soto gratified, than he provided for his companions

in arms who had accompanied him to court. He appointed Nuño de Tobar his Lieutenant-General, for which post the latter was well qualified by his great valour and popular qualities. He made Luis de Moscaso de Alvarado, Camp Master General, and procured for Juan de Anasco the appointment of Contador, or royal accountant. It was the duty of this officer to take account of all the treasures gained in the expedition, and to set apart one fifth for the crown.

De Soto would likewise have engaged Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca to accompany him, and offered him highly advantageous terms, which De Vaca was at first inclined to accept, but subsequently refused, being unwilling to march under the command of another in an enterprise in which he had aspired to take the lead. He afterwards obtained from the Emperor the government of Rio de la Plata.*

But although Alvar Nuñez declined to embark in the enterprise, his representations of the country induced two of his kinsmen to offer their services. One of them, a brave and hardy cavalier, named Balthazar de Gallegos,

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 4.

was so eager for the expedition, that he sold his houses, vineyards and corn-fields, together with fourscore and ten acres of olive orchards, in the neighbourhood of Seville, and determined to take his wife with him to the new world. De Soto was so well pleased with his zeal, that he made him Alguazil Mayor. The other kinsman of Alvar Nuñez was named Christopher Spinola, a gentleman of Genoa, to whom De Soto gave the command of seventy halberdiers of his body guard.

It was soon promulgated throughout Spain that Hernando de Soto, one of the conquerors of Peru, was about to undertake the subjugation of the great empire of Florida, an unknown country, equal if not superior in wealth and splendour to any of the golden empires of the new world, and that he was to do this at his own expense, with the riches gained in his previous conquests.

This was enough to draw to his standard adventurers of every class. Men of noble birth, soldiers of fortune who had served in various parts of the world, private citizens and peaceful artisans, all abandoned their homes and families, sold their effects, and offered themselves and their resources for this new conquest.

A striking account is given of the arrival of a party of these volunteers. As De Soto was one day in the gallery of his house at Seville, he saw a brilliant band of cavaliers enter the court-yard, and hastened to the foot of the stairs to receive them. They were Portuguese hidalgos, led by Andres de Vasconcelos. Several of them had served in the wars against the Moors on the African frontiers, and had come to volunteer their services to De Soto, who joyfully accepted their offer. He detained them to sup with him, and ordered his steward to provide quarters for them in his neighbourhood. A muster being called of all the troops, the Spaniards appeared in splendid and showy attire, with silken doublets and cassocks pinked and embroidered. The Portuguese, on the contrary, came like soldiers, in complete armour. De Soto was vexed at the unseasonable ostentation of his countrymen, and ordered another review in which all should appear armed. Here the Portuguese again came admirably equipped, whilst the Spaniards, who had been so gaudy in their silken dresses, made but a sorry show as warriors, being armed with old rusty coats of mail, battered head pieces, and indifferent lances. The Ge-

neral, it is said, marked his preference of the Portuguese, by placing them near his standard. It must be observed, however, that this is the relation of a Portuguese historian, naturally disposed to give his countrymen every advantage over the Spaniards. Other accounts speak generally of the excellent equipments of all the forces.

In little more than a year from the time that this enterprise was first proclaimed, nine hundred and fifty Spaniards of all degrees had assembled in the port of San Lucar de Barra-meda, to embark in the expedition.* Never had a more gallant and brilliant body of men offered themselves for conquest in the new world. All were young and vigorous, and fitted for the toils, hardships and dangers of so adventurous an undertaking.

De Soto was munificent in his offers of pecuniary assistance, to aid the cavaliers in fitting themselves out according to their rank and station. Many were compelled, through ne-

* The Portuguese narrator gives six hundred as the number of men assembled, but we follow the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, whose authority is corroborated by Herrera and others.

cessity, to accept of these offers; others, who had means, generously declined them, deeming it more proper that they should assist than accept aid from him. Many came splendidly equipped, with rich armour, costly dresses, and a train of domestics. Indeed some young men of quality had spent a great part of their property in this manner.

Nuño Tobar, Luis de Moscoso, and several other high born Spaniards who had distinguished themselves in the conquest of Peru, expended the greater part of their spoils in sumptuous equipments. Beside the cavaliers already specified, we may mention three brothers, relatives of the Governor, who accompanied him; Arias Tinoco and Alonzo Romo de Cardeñosa, both captains of infantry, and Diego Arias Tinoco, standard bearer to the army.

There were also enlisted in the enterprise, twelve priests, eight clergymen of inferior rank, and four monks; most of them relatives of superior officers: for, in every Spanish expedition to the new world, the conversion of the heathen was not lost sight of in the rage for conquest.

This brilliant armament embarked at San Lucar de Barrameda, on the sixth of April,

1538, in seven large and three small vessels. The governor, his wife Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, together with all his family and retinue, embarked in the largest vessel, called the San Christoval, of eight hundred tons burthen. They quitted the Spanish shore in company with a fleet of twenty-six sail bound to Mexico,* amid the braying of trumpets, and the thunder of artillery. The armament of De Soto was so bountifully supplied with naval stores, that each man was allowed double rations. This led to useless waste, but the Governor was of a munificent spirit, and so elated at finding in his train such noble and gallant spirits, that he thought he could not do enough to honour and gratify them.

On the twenty-first of April, the fleet arrived off Gomera, one of the Canary Islands. On landing, they were received with great parade and courtesy by the Governor, who bore the title of Count de Gomera. He seems to have been a gay and luxurious noble, with somewhat of an amatory complexion, his domestic establishment being graced by several natural daughters. When he appeared to re-

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 4.

ceive his guests, he was dressed in white from head to foot, hat, cloak, doublet, breeches and shoes; so that, according to the old Portuguese narrative, he looked not unlike the captain of a gang of gipsies. During three days that the fleet remained in port, he entertained his guests with banquetings and rejoicings.

Among his daughters was one named Leonora de Bobadilla, who particularly attracted the notice of the youthful adventurers. She was not more than seventeen years of age, and extremely beautiful. De Soto was so interested with her appearance and manners, that he entreated the Count to permit her to accompany his wife, Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, who, he promised, should cherish her as her own daughter; intimating that he would procure an advantageous match for her among the noble youths of his army, and advance her to rank and fortune in the country he hoped to conquer.

The Count de Gomera, knowing the munificence of De Soto, and that he would be disposed to perform even more than he promised, confided his daughter to his care, and to the maternal protection of his high-minded and virtuous wife.

On the 24th of April, the fleet again set sail. The voyage was fair and prosperous, and about the latter end of May they arrived in the harbour of the city of Santiago de Cuba.

CHAPTER IV.

Rejoicings of the inhabitants of Cuba on the arrival of De Soto—Deposition of Nuño Tobar—Don Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa, appointed Lieutenant-General of the Forces.

THE arrival of a new Governor, with so important an armament, was an event of great joy throughout the island of Cuba. When de Soto landed, the whole city of Santiago turned out to receive him. He found a beautiful horse, richly caparisoned, waiting for him, and likewise a mule for Doña Isabella,—both furnished by a gentleman of the town. He was escorted to his lodgings by the burghers, on horse and on foot, and all his officers and men were hospitably entertained by them; some

being quartered in the town, and others in their country houses.* For several days there was one continued festival. At night there were balls and masquerades; by day, tilting matches, bull fights, contests of skill in horsemanship, running at the ring, and other amusements of a chivalrous nature.

The young cavaliers of the army, vied with each other and with the youth of the city in the gallantry of their equipments, the elegance and novelty of their devices, and the wit and ingenuity of their mottoes. What gave peculiar splendour to these entertainments was the beauty, spirit, and excellence of the horses. The great demand for these noble animals, for the conquests of Mexico and Peru, and other parts of America, had rendered the raising of them a very profitable source of speculation in the islands. The island of Cuba was naturally favourable for breeding horses, and as great attention had been given to multiply and improve the breed, there was at this time an uncommon number, and of remarkably fine qualities. Many individuals had from twenty to thirty valuable horses in their stables,

* Portuguese Relation, c. 4.

and some of the rich had twice that number on their estates.

The young and spirited adventurers had spared no expense in furnishing themselves with excellent steeds for their intended expedition. Many individuals possessed three or four, caparisoned in a very costly manner; and the Governor aided liberally with his purse, such as had not the means of suitably equipping themselves.

Thus mounted and arrayed in their new dresses and burnished armour, the young competitors made a brilliant display, and carried off many prizes of gold and silver, silks and brocades, which were adjudged to those who distinguished themselves in these chivalrous games.

No one carried off the prize more frequently than Nuño de Tobar, the Lieutenant-General. He was, as has been said, a cavalier of high and generous qualities, who had gained laurels in the conquest of Peru. He appeared at these entertainments in sumptuous array, mounted on a superb horse, of a silver grey dappled, and was noted for the gracefulness of his carriage, his noble demeanour, and his admirable address in the management both of lance and steed.

Unfortunately the manly qualifications of Nuño Tobar had procured him great favour in the eyes of the beautiful Leonora de Bobadilla, daughter of the Count de Gomera. A secret amour was carried on between them, and the lady's virtue was not proof against the solicitations of her lover.*

The consequences of their criminal intercourse were soon too apparent to be concealed. De Soto was incensed at what he considered an outrage upon his rights as guardian over the lady, and a violation of his confidence as a friend. He immediately deposed Nuño Tobar from his station as Lieutenant-General; and, though that really generous, and spirited young soldier endeavoured to make every reparation in his power, by marrying the lady, De Soto could never afterwards be brought to look upon him with kindness.

At this time, there was on a visit to the Governor in the city of Santiago, a cavalier, upwards of fifty years of age, named Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa. He was of noble descent, and brave, having seen much hard fighting under the first Spanish leaders in the

* Portuguese Narrative, Conq. of Florida, c. 7.

new world, as well as in Spain and Italy, where he had distinguished himself on various occasions. He now resided in the town of Trinidad in Cuba, living opulently and luxuriously upon the wealth he had gained in the wars, honoured for his exploits, loved for his social qualities, and extolled for his hearty hospitality.

This magnificent old officer had come to Santiago with a pompous retinue, to pay his court to the Governor, and witness the festivities. He passed some days in the city, and when he beheld the array of gallant cavaliers and hardy soldiers assembled for the enterprize, the splendour of their equipments, and the martial style in which they acquitted themselves, his military spirit again took fire, and forgetting his years, his past toils and troubles, and his present ease and opulence, he volunteered to follow De Soto in his anticipated career of conquest.

A volunteer of such military experience, ample wealth, and great influence in the island, was too important not to be received with open arms. The Governor immediately made him Lieutenant-General of the army; the post from which the gallant but unfortunate Nuño Tobar had been recently deposed.

The conduct of Vasco Porcallo, shewed the policy of this appointment. He was so elated with the distinction, that he lavished his money without stint in purchasing provisions for the armada. He was magnificent too in all his appointments, camp equipage, armour and equipments, having caught the gay spirit of his youthful companions in arms. He carried with him a numerous train of Spanish, Indian and negro servants, together with a stud of thirty-six horses for his own use: whilst with that liberality for which he was remarkable, he gave upwards of fifty horses as presents to various cavaliers of the army.

The example of this generous, though somewhat whimsical old man, had a powerful effect in animating the inhabitants of Cuba to promote the success of the expedition, and in inducing some to enrol themselves among the followers of De Soto.*

* The Portuguese narrator drily asserts that Vasco Porcallo engaged in the expedition merely with a view to get slaves for his estates in Cuba. This narrator, however, is to be distrusted, when he assigns motives to the Spanish leaders, against whom he seems to have entertained a national antipathy. I have preferred the motives attributed by the Inca, as they seem borne out by facts,

For three months the Governor made a tour of the island, visiting the principal towns, appointing officers to rule in his absence, purchasing horses, and making other provisions for his expedition. Towards the end of August, he repaired to Havana, where he was afterwards joined by his family and by all his forces. Here he remained for a time aiding the inhabitants, from the resources of his own fortune, to rebuild their houses and churches, which had recently been destroyed by French corsairs.

While thus occupied he twice despatched the Contador Juan de Añasco, in a brigantine manned with picked sailors, to coast along the shores of Florida, in quest of some commodious harbour, where there might be found secure anchorage, and a good landing place for the troops, and for which the expedition might sail direct.

Juan de Añasco, was well fitted for such

and by the general conduct of this veteran Porcallo, whose character though peculiar, is nevertheless, essentially Spanish. Indeed, throughout the whole work of the Inca, his rich and copious facts are always in harmony with the characteristic peculiarities of his persons.

a service, uniting at once many of the best qualities of the naval and military character, and possessing some skill in nautical science. He was fond, too, of hazardous enterprises, never flinching from toils or perils, and was altogether an excellent leader, though somewhat choleric.

Three months elapsed after Añasco's departure on his second voyage, without any tidings of him having been received: great fears were consequently entertained for his safety, when, after escaping many perils, his tempest-tossed bark arrived at Havana.

No sooner did Juan de Añasco and his crew set foot upon land, than they threw themselves on their knees, and in this way crawled to church to hear mass, in fulfilment of a vow made in an hour of great peril. When this was done, they related all the dangers they had escaped on sea and land; having once been near foundering, and having passed two months on an uninhabited island, subsisting on shell-fish gathered from the beach, and upon wild fowl knocked down with clubs.

Juan de Añasco, however, "had faithfully fulfilled the great object of his cruise, having

found a secure harbour on the coast of Florida. He brought with him, also, four of the natives whom he had captured, to serve as interpreters and guides.

All his forces being now assembled in Havana, and the season favourable for sailing being at hand, the Governor made his final arrangements, appointing his wife Doña Isabel de Bodadilla to govern the island during his absence, with Juan de Roxas, as Lieutenant-Governor, and Francisco de Guzman as his Lieutenant, in the city of Santiago. These two cavaliers had been in command prior to De Soto's arrival at the island, and had proved themselves worthy of this great mark of confidence.*

* The Inca, lib. I. c. 13. Portuguese Relation, c. vii. Herrera. D. vi. L. 7. c. 9.

CHAPTER V.

De Soto meets with an old comrade, Hernan Ponce ;
much against the will of the latter.

WHILE the Governor was waiting for a fair wind to embark, a ship was seen hovering off the port, driven there by stress of weather, but evidently endeavouring to keep from the land. Three times it was forced to the mouth of the harbour, and as often made its way against contrary winds to the broad ocean, as if the greatest anxiety of the crew was to avoid the port. At length, after struggling four or five days against tempestuous weather, they were compelled to anchor in the harbour.

The ship came from Nombre de Dios, on the Isthmus of Panama, and the reason of

this strange conduct of her commander is stated to have been as follows. On board was Hernan Ponce, an old comrade of Hernando De Soto. They had sought their fortunes together in Peru, and when the latter quitted that country for a time to visit Spain, he entered into articles of partnership, or brotherhood, as it was is called, with Hernan Ponce, as was frequently done by the Spanish discoverer and soldiers of fortune in the new world. By these articles they bound themselves, during their lives, to an equal participation of gains and losses, and of all things, whether of honour or profit.

After the departure of De Soto for Spain, Hernan Ponce had amassed much wealth, and recovered several debts which De Soto had left with him to be collected. Having turned all his property into gold and silver, jewels and precious stones, he embarked for Spain, but, at the port of embarkation, heard of the new enterprise of his old comrade, De Soto, and that he was at Havana with a great and expensive armament appointed for the conquest of Florida.

Hernan Ponce had no ambition to join in the conquest; for he feared that De Soto,

having expended all his own wealth upon his outfits, would claim his right of partnership, and seek to share the treasures which his former comrade was carrying home, if not to grasp the whole. Hernan Ponce, therefore, anxious to steer clear of the port of Havana and to pursue his voyage, had made large offers to the mariners to induce them to keep out at sea, but tempestuous weather had forced them into port. No sooner did Hernando De Soto hear of his friend's arrival, than he sent persons on board to congratulate him, and invite him on shore to share his house, his possessions, and all his honours and commands. He shortly followed in person, repeating his congratulations and offers.

Hernan Ponce would gladly have dispensed both with compliments and confraternity. He quaked in secret for the safety of his treasures. He affected, however, to reciprocate the joy and good-will of his former comrade, but excused himself from landing until the following day, pleading the necessity of rest and sleep, after the fatigues of the late tempest. De Soto left him to his repose, but suspecting, or having had some intimation of his real circumstances and designs, he secretly stationed

sentinels by sea and land to keep a watch upon the movements of his ancient partner. His precautions were not vain. About midnight, Hernan Ponce landed two coffers, containing all his gold, pearls, and precious stones, to be concealed in some hamlet, or buried on the shore, leaving only the silver on board, to keep up appearances; intending to pass it off as the whole of his wealth.

No sooner had the mariners landed the coffers, and carried them some distance from the boat, than a party of sentinels rushed out from a thicket, put them to flight, and seizing upon the treasure, conveyed it to the Governor.

The confusion and distress of Hernan Ponce, at thus losing, by a measure intended for its safety, what he had been at such pains to secure, may easily be imagined. He landed the next day with a sorrowful countenance, and took up his abode with De Soto.

In the course of their private conversation, he soon revealed the misfortune of the preceding night. The Governor, who had been waiting for the opportunity, now indignantly reproached him with having attempted to conceal his treasures, through want of faith in his justice and

friendship, but to show him how groundless had been his distrust, he ordered the coffers to be brought in, and, requested his former companion to open them, and see if any thing were missing.

He further declared, that all he had expended in his present undertaking, all the titles, commands, and privileges he had obtained from the crown, he had considered for their mutual benefit, according to their terms of co-partnership and confraternity. This he offered to prove by witnesses then with him, who had been present at the execution of the writings. He now asked whether Hernan Ponce chose to accompany him in his conquest or not, declaring himself ready to share with him his titles and commands, or to yield to him such of them as he might prefer.

The selfish Spaniard, Hernan Ponce, was confounded as much by the generous courtesy of the Governor, as by a sense of his own delinquency; nevertheless, his heart yearned more after his own treasures, than after all De Soto's anticipated conquests. He excused himself as well as he could for the past, pretended to be highly gratified at being still considered De Soto's partner and brother,

but declined all participation in his titles. He begged that their writings of co-partnership might be renewed and made public, and that his Excellency would proceed with his conquest; while he returned to Spain, leaving to some future occasion the division of all their gains. To testify his acceptance of one half of the conquest, he entreated his friend to permit his wife, Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, to receive ten thousand dollars in gold and silver towards the expenses of the expedition, being half of what he had brought from Peru.

De Soto granted his request; the ten thousand dollars were paid into the hands of Doña Isabel, the articles of co-partnership renewed, and during the whole stay of Hernan Ponce at Havana, he was always addressed as his Excellency, and received the same personal honours as the Governor.

The heart of Hernan Ponce, however, was with his money-bags, and delighted not in these empty honours. Under various pretexts, he deferred sailing for Spain until after the embarkation of De Soto and his army for Florida. Eight days after the Governor had sailed, and when there was no longer a likelihood of his prompt return, Hernan Ponce

addressed a memorial in writing to Juan de Rojas, the Lieutenant-Governor, declaring that the ten thousand dollars given to Hernando de Soto, had not been paid as a just debt, but through fear lest the Governor should make use of his power to strip him of all his property. He begged, therefore, that Doña Isabel de Bobadilla might be compelled to refund the sum thus tyrannically obtained, otherwise he should complain to the Emperor of the injustice with which he had been treated.

When Doña Isabel heard of this claim, she immediately replied, that there were many accounts, both new and old, to be settled between Hernan Ponce and her husband, as would be seen by the writings of co-partnership. By those writings it would also appear, that Hernan Ponce owed her husband more than fifty thousand ducats, being half of the amount expended in the outfit for the projected conquest. She demanded, therefore, that Hernan Ponce should be arrested and held in bond until all these accounts could be examined and adjusted, which she offered immediately to attend to, in the name of her husband.

Hernan Ponce obtained a hint of the new troubles preparing for him, and fearing, should

he fall into the hands of justice, that he would meet with little mercy, he hoisted sail before the harpies of the law could get hold of him, and made the best of his way to Spain, leaving his ten thousand dollars and all the unsettled accounts in the hands of Doña Isabel.* Having thus disposed of this episode, we will step back eight days in our chronology, to relate the sailing of the expedition for Florida.

* Hist. of Florida per el Inca Lib. i. c. 14, 15.

CHAPTER VI.

The armament sets sail from Cuba—Arrival and landing in Florida—Exploit of Vasco Porcallo—They come upon the first traces of Pamphilo de Narvaez.

ON the 12th of May 1539, Hernando de Soto sailed from Havana on his great enterprise. His squadron consisted of eight large vessels, a caravel, and two brigantines, all freighted with ample means of conquest and of colonization. In addition to the forces brought from Spain, he had been joined by many volunteers, and recruits in Cuba; thus his armament, beside the ships' crews, amounted to a thousand men,—the horses to three hundred and fifty. It was altogether the most splendid expedition that had yet set out for the new world.

The squadron was driven by contrary winds into the Gulf of Mexico where it remained for several days. At length, on Whitsunday, the twenty-fifth of May, it arrived at the mouth of a deep bay, to which, in honour of the day, De Soto gave the name of Espiritu Santo, which it still retains.

The expedition had scarcely arrived on the coast, when they beheld fires blazing along the shore, and columns of smoke rising in different directions. It was evident the natives had taken alarm, and were summoning their warriors. De Soto, therefore, observed the precaution not to disembark his troops, but remained several days on board the ships; sounding the harbour, and seeking a secure landing place. Meanwhile a boat was sent on shore to procure grass for the horses. The sailors brought off also a quantity of green grapes, which had been found growing wild in the woods. They resembled those of Spain, and were of a kind different from any that the Spaniards had seen either in Mexico or Peru. They regarded them with exultation as proofs of a fruitful country.

At length, on the last day of the month, a detachment of three hundred soldiers landed,

and took formal possession of the country, in the name of Charles V. Not a single Indian was to be seen, and the troops remained all night on shore, in a state of careless security. Towards the dawn, however, an immense number of savages broke suddenly upon them with deafening yells. Several Spaniards were wounded with arrows; many were seized with panic, as new-levied troops are apt to be in their first encounter, especially when in a strange land and assailed by strange foes. They retreated to the beach in great confusion, crowding so closely together as to prevent each other from fighting to advantage, and sounding an alarm with drum and trumpet.

The din of this tumult was heard on board the fleet. Those seemingly lifeless hulks were immediately as busy as swarms of bees, when their republic is invaded: armour was buckled on in haste, and a reinforcement quickly landed. The Lieutenant-General, Vasco Porcallo, with seven horsemen, took the lead, not a little pleased at having so early an opportunity of displaying his prowess. Dashing his spurs into his horse's sides, and brandishing his lance, he charged the savages, who fled after a

faint resistance. He pursued them for a while, and then returned highly elated at the success of this first encounter.

Scarcely* had he reached the camp, however, when his horse staggered under him and fell dead, having been wounded by an arrow in the course of the skirmish. The shaft had been sent with such force as to pass through the saddle and its housings, and bury itself, one third of its length, between the animal's ribs. Vasco Porcallo rose triumphant from his fall, vaunting that the first horse which had fallen in this expedition was his, and his the first lance raised against the infidels.

The remainder of the troops were now disembarked and encamped on the borders of the bay, where they remained a few days reposing after the fatigues of their voyage. They then marched to a village situated about two leagues down the coast. The ships being lightened by the landing of the troops, were enabled with the aid of the tide, to take their station opposite.

The village was deserted by the inhabitants. It consisted of several large houses, built of wood and thatched with palm leaves. At one end stood a kind of temple, on the top of which was

the image of a bird made of wood, with gilded eyes. In this edifice was found a quantity of pearls of small value, having been injured by fire, in boring them for necklaces and bracelets.

In an opposite quarter of the village was the dwelling of the Cacique, built upon an artificial eminence, near the shore, and so constructed as to serve as a fortress. Here the Governor took up his residence, with his Lieutenant, the veteran Porcallo, and his Camp-Master, Luis de Moscoso. The other houses were converted into barracks for the troops, and store-houses for provisions and ammunition which had been brought on shore from the vessels. The ground was cleared round the village to the distance of a bow-shot, so as to give room for the cavalry to act in case of a sudden surprise in the night, which recent experience had taught the Spaniards to guard against. Sentinels also were placed at every point, and parties of horsemen patrolled the neighbourhood.

The Governor at length succeeded in capturing a few straggling Indians, natives of the place, from whom he learned the cause of their 'countrymen's fierce hostility, and of their deserting the village. He had come upon

the traces of his predecessor, Pamphilo de Narvaez, who had unfortunately committed the most cruel outrages. Naryaez in his expedition to Florida had been bravely opposed by the Cacique of this village, whose name was Hirrihigua,* but having at length succeeded in winning his friendship, a treaty was formed between them. Subsequently, however, Narvaez became enraged at the Cacique for some un-

* We give this name according to Garcilaso de la Vega: the Portuguese historian calls the Cacique Ucita. These two authorities often differ as to Indian names. Sometimes they merely vary in the spelling, as is natural where the names were caught by ear, and did not originally exist in writing. At other times they differ entirely; one narrator having probably heard a village and province called by its proper and permanent name, the other by the name of its Cacique. These discrepancies are common and unavoidable, in the narratives of adventurers among savage tribes, whose language is unwritten and but little understood. Where irreconcilable differences occur, we are generally inclined to follow the Inca, as he received his facts from three different members of the expedition, one a gentleman of rank, the other two, private soldiers; whereas the Portuguese account has merely the authority of a single witness. The account of the transactions on landing are chiefly taken from the Inca, and occasionally from the Portuguese narrative.

known reason, and in a transport of passion ordered his nose to be cut off, and his mother to be torn to pieces by dogs. These merciless wrongs, as may well be supposed, had filled the heart of Hirrihigua with the bitterest hatred of white men.

De Soto, having heard this story, endeavoured to appease the Cacique and to gain his friendship. For this purpose, he treated in the kindest manner, his subjects, whom he had captured, and sent them, laden with presents, to seek their chieftain in his retreat, and invite him to amicable intercourse. The Cacique was offended with his subjects for daring to bring him messages from a race who had injured him so deeply. "I want neither their speeches nor promises," said he, bitterly, "bring me their heads, and I will receive them joyfully."

De Soto reluctant to leave so powerful a foe between himself and his ships, endeavoured, by repeated envoys to soften the animosity of the Cacique: but every message only provoked a more bitter and scornful reply.

While negotiating with this vindictive savage, De Soto received intelligence that there was a Spaniard, a survivor of the followers of Pam-

philo de Narvaez, living under the protection of a neighbouring Cacique called Mucozo.* To obtain the services of this Spaniard was now a matter of great moment, for, having lived upwards of ten years in the country, he had become acquainted with the language and customs of the natives, and was consequently well fitted to act as guide, interpreter, and negotiator. De Soto accordingly despatched Baltazar de Gallegos, chief Alguazil, at the head of sixty lancers, and under the guidance of a native Indian, on an embassy to the Cacique Mucozo, to obtain the Spaniard's release, and invite the chieftain to his camp, with assurances of friendship and munificent rewards.

As this Spaniard was subsequently of great service throughout the expedition, and as his story is illustrative of the character and customs of the natives, and of the implacable resentment of the Cacique Hirrihigua, we will diverge for a moment from the main course of our narrative, to relate some particulars of his adventures.

* Mucozo. Portuguese Narrative.

CHAPTER VII.

Story of Juan Ortiz.

SHORTLY after Pamphilo de Narvaez had quitted the village of Hirrihigua on his disastrous march into the interior, a small vessel of his fleet which was in quest of him, put into the bay of Espiritu Santo. Anchoring before the town, they saw a few Indians on the shore, who made signs for them to land, pointing to a letter at the end of a cleft reed, stuck into the ground. The Spaniards supposing, and probably with justice, that it was a letter of instruction left by Narvaez, giving information of his movements and destination, made signs for the Indians to bring it to them. The latter, however, refused, but getting into a canoe came on board, four of them offering to remain as hostages for such Spaniards as chose

to go on shore for the letter. Four Spaniards immediately stepped into the canoe. The moment they landed, a multitude of savages rushed out of the village and surrounded them; at the same time, the hostages on board plunged into the sea and swam to land. The crew of the vessel, seeing the number of the enemy, and dreading some further mischief, made sail with all haste, abandoning their luckless comrades to their fate.*

The captives were conveyed with savage triumph into the village of Hirrihigua; for the whole had been a stratagem of that Cacique, to get into his power some of the white men, upon whom he might wreak his vengeance. He placed his prisoners under a strong guard, until the day of a religious festival. They were then stripped naked, led out into the public square of the village and turned loose, one at a time, to be shot at with arrows. To prolong their misery and the enjoyment of their tormentors, only one Indian was allowed to shoot at a time. In this way the first three Spaniards were sacrificed, and the Cacique took

* Garcilaso de la Vega. Part 1. L. 2. c. 1. Portuguese Narrative, c. 9. Herrera. D. 6. L. 7. c. 10.

a vindictive pleasure in beholding them, running in their agony from corner to corner, vainly seeking an asylum in every nook, until after being repeatedly wounded, they were shot to death.

Juan Ortiz, a lad, scarcely eighteen years old, and of a noble family, was the fourth victim. As they were leading him forth, his extreme youth touched with compassion the hearts of the wife and daughters of the Cacique, who interceded in his favour.

Hirrihigua listened to their importunities, and, for the present, granted the life of Ortiz ; —but it proved to be a most wretched boon. From morning until evening he was employed in carrying wood and water, being allowed but little sleep, and less food. Not a day passed that he was not beaten. On festivals he was an object of barbarous amusement to the Cacique, who would oblige him to run from sunrise to sunset, in the public square of the village, where his companions had been so barbarously sacrificed. Upon those occasions, a number of Indians were stationed at different parts of the quadrangle with bows and arrows, to shoot him, should he halt one moment. When the day was spent, the unfortunate

youth lay stretched on the hard floor of his hut, more dead than alive. At such times the Chief's wife and daughters would come to him privately with food and clothing, and by their kind treatment his life was preserved.

At length the Cacique being determined to put an end to his victim's existence, ordered that he should be bound upon a wooden frame, in the form of a huge gridiron, placed over a bed of burning coals, and roasted alive.

The cries and shrieks of the miserable sufferer reached his female protectors, and their entreaties were once more successful with the Cacique. They unbound Ortiz, dragged him from the fire, and took him to their dwelling, where they bathed his wounds with the juice of herbs, and tended him with assiduous care. After many days he recovered, though his body was marked with many a deep scar.

His employment was now to guard the village cemetery, which was in a lonely field in the bosom of a forest. The bodies of the dead were deposited in wooden boxes, covered with boards, without any fastening except a stone or a log of wood laid upon the

top; so that the bodies were often carried away by wild beasts.

In this cemetery, Ortiz was stationed with a bow and arrows, to watch day and night, and was told, that should a single body be carried away, he would be burnt alive. He returned thanks to God for having freed him from the dreaded presence of Hirrihigua, hoping to lead a better life with the dead than he had lately done with the living.

Upon one occasion while he was watching, towards morning sleep overpowered him. Being awakened by the lid of one of the chests suddenly falling, upon examination he found that the body had disappeared. The chest had contained the corpse of an infant recently deceased,—the child of an Indian of note.

Ortiz supposing some animal had dragged it away, immediately set out in pursuit. After wandering for some time, at a short distance within the woods, he heard a noise like that of a dog gnawing bones. Drawing near to the spot with a stealthy step, he dimly perceived a living object among the bushes, and invoking aid from on high, discharged an arrow at it. The thick and tangled underwood prevented him

from seeing the effect of his shot, but as the animal did not stir, he flattered himself that he had killed it. With this hope he waited until the day dawned, when he beheld his victim, a huge creature of the panther kind,* lying dead, the arrow having passed through its entrails and pierced its heart.

Gathering together the mangled remains of the infant, and replacing them in the coffin, Ortiz dragged his prey in triumph to the village, with the arrow still in its body. The exploit gained him credit with the old hunters, and for some time softened even the ferocity of Hirihigua. The resentment of the latter, however, for the wrongs he had suffered from white men, was too bitter to be appeased. Some time after, his eldest daughter came to Ortiz and warned him that her father had determined to sacrifice him at the next festival, which was just at hand. She stated that the influence of her mother, her sisters and herself, would be no longer of any avail to save him, and therefore, wished that he should take refuge with a

* The Inca calls this animal a lion, as the Spanish discoverers were in the habit of calling animals of the tiger or panther kind.

neighbouring Cacique named Mucozo, who had sought her in marriage, and would befriend him, for her sake. "This very night," said the kind-hearted maiden, "at the northern extremity of the village, you will find a trusty friend who will guide you to a bridge about two leagues hence ; on arriving there, you must send him back, that he may reach home before the morning dawns, to avoid suspicion—for well he knows that this bold act, in daring to assist you, may bring down destruction upon us both. Six leagues further on you will reach the village of Mucozo. Tell him that I have sent you, and expect him to befriend you in your extremity. I know he will do it. Go, and may your God protect you!" Ortiz threw himself at the feet of his generous protectress, and poured out his acknowledgments for the kindness she had always shown him. An Indian was at the place appointed, to direct him and they quitted the village without alarming the warlike savages. When they came to the bridge, Ortiz sent back the guide, in obedience to the injunction of his mistress, and continuing his flight found himself, by break of day, on the banks of a small stream near the village of Mucozo.

Looking cautiously round, he saw two natives fishing. As he was unacquainted with their language, and could not explain the cause of his appearance in their neighbourhood, he was in dread lest they should take him for an enemy and kill him. He, therefore, ran swiftly to the place where they had deposited their weapons and seized them. The savages fled to the village, without attending to his signs of friendly intention. The inhabitants sallied out armed with bows and arrows, and were about to attack him; but Ortiz fixing an arrow in his bow prepared for defence, crying out at the same moment, that he came not as an enemy, but as an ambassador from a female Cacique to their chief. Fortunately one present understood him, and interpreted his words. Upon this the Indians unbent their bows, and returning with him to their village, presented him to Mucozo. The latter, a youthful chieftain, of a graceful form and handsome countenance, received Ortiz kindly for the sake of her who had sent him; but, on further acquaintance, became attached to him for his own merits, and treated him with the affection of a brother.

Hirrihigua soon heard where the fugitive

had taken refuge, and demanded several times that he should be delivered up. Mucozo as often declined ; considering himself bound by the laws of honour and hospitality to protect him. Hirrihigua then employed as mediator another Cacique, a brother-in-law of Mucozo, who went in person to demand Ortiz. The generous Mucozo, however, indignantly refused to deliver up to a cruel enemy, the poor fugitive who had come so well recommended to his protection, and treated the request as a stain upon his honour. The two Caciques continued their importunities, but the high minded savage remained faithful to his guest, though in maintaining inviolate the sacred rites of hospitality, he lost the friendship of his brother-in-law, and forfeited the hand of Hirrihigua's beautiful daughter, whom he tenderly loved.

CHAPTER VIII.

Baltazar de Gallegos despatched in search of Juan Ortiz—
The Cacique Mucozo, and afterwards his mother, visit
the Spanish camp.

1539. AT this juncture tidings reached Mucozo of De Soto's arrival at the village of Hirrihigua, with his troops, and that it was their intention to conquer the country. The Cacique, alarmed at this intelligence, addressed himself thus to Ortiz. "You well know," said he, "what I have done for you; that I sheltered you when you were friendless, and have chosen rather to fall into disgrace with my relations and neighbours, than deliver you into the hands of your enemies. This I have done without thought or hope of reward, but the time is now come when you can re-

quite my friendship. Go to the chieftain of this army of white men which has arrived, make known to him the asylum I have given you, and which, under the same circumstances, I would have afforded to any of your countrymen—entreat him, in return, not to lay waste my small territory, and assure him that I and mine are ready to devote ourselves to his service.”

Ortiz gladly departed on the mission, accompanied by fifty chosen warriors. It happened that about the same time Baltazar de Gallegos had been dispatched, as has been already mentioned, on his embassy to Mucozo.

As Ortiz and his Indian escort were on their way to the village of Hirrihigua, they came in sight of Baltazar and his band, whose lances glistened at a distance, amidst a verdant plain, skirted by a wood.

The Indians would have concealed themselves in the forest, until the Christians could be informed that they were friends; but Ortiz rejecting their advice, insisted that his countrymen would at once recognise him; not reflecting that in appearance he did not differ from his savage companions, being like them, almost naked, his body bronzed by exposure to the

sun, his arms painted, having a quiver at his back, a bow and arrow in his hand, and his head adorned with feathers.

No sooner did the Spaniards perceive the savages, than they came down upon them at full gallop, heedless of the voice of their captain ; for they were newly raised soldiers, full of spirit, and eager for a contest with the natives.

The Indians seeing their furious approach, fled terrified to the wood. One of their number, however, being bewildered, or possessing more courage than the rest, loitered behind. He was pursued by a Spaniard, and before he could attain the shelter of the adjacent thicket, was overtaken by the trooper's lance. Juan Ortiz was assaulted by Alvaro Nieto, one of the stoutest and boldest troopers in the army, who charged him with his lance. Ortiz parried the thrust with his bow, at the same time leaping from side to side with great agility to avoid the horse, crying out lustily *Xivilla, Xivilla*—meaning *Seville, Seville* ; and making the sign of the cross with his arm and bow, to signify that he was a Christian.

Alvaro Nieto hearing him cry out *Xivilla*, demanded whether he was Juan Ortiz. On

his replying in the affirmative, Nieto seized him by the arm, lifted him upon the croup of his horse, and scoured over the plain to present him to Baltazar de Gallegos. The captain received him with great joy, and ordered his troopers to be immediately recalled, for they were in the woods, hunting the poor Indians like so many deer.

Ortiz himself went into the forest and called with a loud voice to the Indians, to come out of the thickets and fear nothing. Many of them, however, were panic-struck and fled back to their village, to acquaint Mucozo with what had happened. Others joined Ortiz in small parties, upbraiding him with his rashness, but when they found one of their people wounded, they were so exasperated, that they would have laid violent hands upon the Spaniard, had not his countrymen been present.

They were at length pacified. The soldiers bound up the wounds of the Indian, and placed him upon a horse. The troopers, having taken up all the savages behind them, galloped away for the encampment of the Governor. Previously to setting off, however, Ortiz despatched a messenger to Mucozo, with a true account of the late events, lest that Cacique should be irritated

at the statement carried to him by the terrified fugitives.*

The night was already far advanced when Baltazar de Gallegos and his band reached the camp. The Governor hearing the tramp of horses, was filled with alarm, suspecting some mischance had befallen them, as he did not look for them before the expiration of three days. His apprehensions, however, were soon turned to rejoicing. He gave Gallegos and his men credit for the success of their expedition, and received Ortiz as his own son, sympathizing with him in his past sufferings, at the same time presenting him with a suit of clothes, with arms, and a good horse.† De Soto treated the Indians who accompanied him with every mark of kindness, and ordered the wounded savage to be taken care of. He then despatched two of the natives to Mucozo, thanking him for his past benevolence to Ortiz, accepting his offers of friendship, and inviting him to the Spanish camp. Not an eye was

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 8. Herrera, D. 6. L. 7. c. 9.

† Portuguese Narrative, c. 7. Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1. L. 2. c. 7. Herrera, Decad. 6. L. 7. c. 10.

closed that night, but one and all joined in the revelry which welcomed the liberation of poor Ortiz.

On the third day after the envoys had been despatched, the Cacique Mucozo arrived, accompanied by his warriors. He kissed the Governor's hand with great veneration, saluted each of the officers, and made a slight obeisance to the privates. De Soto received him with affectionate courtesy, and assured him that his people would be ever grateful to him for all his past kindnesses.

"What I have done unto Ortiz," said Mucozo, "is but little indeed; he came well recommended to me, and threw himself upon my protection. There is a law of our tribe, which forbids our betraying a fugitive who solicits an asylum. But his own virtue and dauntless courage entitled him to all the respect which has been shown him. That I have pleased your people I rejoice exceedingly, and by devoting myself, henceforth, to their service, I hope to merit their esteem."

These words were uttered with so much grace, the Cacique's bearing was so noble, his manner so full of kindness, that De Soto and his officers were touched, and made presents to him and to his warriors.

Two days afterwards, the mother of Mucozo came to the camp, overwhelmed with grief because her son was in the christians' power. She would not have consented to his visiting the army, had she been present at the time of his departure. She passionately entreated the Governor to deliver up her son, and not serve him as Narvaez had served Hirrihigua. "He is young," said she, "only give him his liberty, and take me, who am a poor old woman, and treat me as you please. I will bear any punishment for both." De Soto endeavoured to reassure her by expressions of gratitude and friendship towards her son and herself; but though she remained three days in the camp, and was treated by every one with no less kindness than respect, she continued anxious and suspicious. She ate at the table of the Governor, but would partake of nothing until Ortiz had tasted it, fearing she might be poisoned. "How is this," said a Spaniard to her, "that you who offered to die for your son, have now so great a fear of death?"

"I have the same love of life as other mortals," she replied, "but most willingly would I lose it to save a son, who is far dearer to me than life itself!"

Even when assured of her son's perfect liberty, and that he only remained for a time with the Spaniards through choice, because they were young and generous spirits like himself, she was but poorly comforted, and departed in sorrow. On quitting the Spanish camp, she took Juan Ortiz aside, and besought him to liberate Mucozo, as the latter had saved him from the hands of Hirrihigua.

The Cacique remained with the army eight days, during which time he became very familiar with the Spaniards, and was inspired with perfect confidence in them. He went home well contented, and frequently afterwards visited the Governor, bringing always a number of presents.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega. P. 1. L. 2. c. 7. 8.

CHAPTER IX.

The Governor endeavours to gain the friendship of Hirrihigua—Gallegos despatched on an expedition to the village of Urribarracaxi—He hears of a region to the westward abounding with gold—The expedition of the veteran Vasco Porcallo in quest of the Cacique Hirrihigua, and how he fared in a swamp.

1539. While these things were passing in the camp, the provisions and military stores were landed from the caravels, and secured in the village of Hirrihigua. The Adelantado, following the example of Cortes and other renowned captains, despatched seven of the largest vessels to Havana, in order that his followers might lose all hope of quitting the country; retaining only a caravel and two brigantines to protect the sea coast and bay.*

* Herrera. Hist. Ind. Decad. vi. L. vii. c. 10.

He appointed to the command of this important post Pedro Calderon, a hardy veteran, nursed in a rough school, amid camps and battle scenes, having served in his youth under the great Captain Gonsalvo de Cordova.

De Soto left no means untried to gain the friendship of Hirrihigua, being aware that the example of this powerful chieftain would have great weight with the neighbouring Caciques. Accordingly, in foraging the adjacent country, whenever the troopers captured a vassal of this Cacique, the Governor instantly sent him home loaded with presents and charged with kind messages, urging Hirrihigua to accept his offered alliance, and promising every reparation for the wrongs inflicted upon him by Pamphilo de Narvaez. These wrongs, however, were too deep to be easily obliterated from the stern bosom of the savage. The only reply he deigned to give was, "The memory of my injuries forbid me sending a kind answer, and a harsh one your courtesy will not allow me to return." Still these constant and unwearied exertions of De Soto in some measure mitigated the Cacique's deadly rancour against the Spaniards.

The Governor made many inquiries of Ortiz respecting the country, and whether there was

any district abounding with gold and silver. Ortiz knew of none such, and could give but little information. During his bitter servitude under Hirrihigua, he had been closely watched, and not allowed to wander : and although while dwelling with Mucozo he had enjoyed perfect liberty, yet he dared not venture far, through fear of being way-laid by his enemies. He had heard much, however, of a Cacique named Urribarracaxi, whose village was thirty leagues distant. He was said to be the most powerful chieftain of the country. To him Mucozo, Hirrihigua, and all the other Caciques of the coast paid tribute, and his territories were far more fertile than those nearer the sea.*

The Governor despatched Baltazar de Gallegos on an expedition to the village of this powerful chief. Gallegos chose the same sixty lancers who had accompanied him when he went in search of Juan Ortiz, and likewise sixty foot soldiers, armed with cross-bows and bucklers. He was accompanied by Ortiz as guide and interpreter. On approach-

* Portuguese Relation, c. 9. The name of the Cacique in the Portuguese Narrative is Paracoxi. We follow the Inca.

ing the village of Mucozo, that Cacique came out to receive them, and entertained them for the night with great hospitality. Next morning the Captain demanded a guide to the village of Urribarracaxi. The Cacique at first thought that his designs upon the village were hostile, and shrank with a noble spirit from what would have been an act of perfidy against his relative and neighbour. When he found, however, that the Spaniards were on a friendly errand, and only wanted one of his vassals, to go before and inform Urribarracaxi of their amicable intentions, he gladly furnished them with an Indian for the purpose, who had been a friend of Juan Ortiz.

The Spaniards had been occasionally impeded by morasses during their progress into the interior: these became less frequent the farther they went from the sea. In the course of their journey, they observed many trees similar to those of Spain, such as walnut, oak, mulberry, plumb, pine, and evergreen oak. There were wild grapes also in abundance.

The distance from the village of Mucozo, to that of his brother-in-law was about seventeen leagues. The adventurers arrived

there in four days, but found it deserted, the inhabitants having fled to the woods. Gallegos sent his envoy repeatedly to the Cacique, with the most friendly messages, but every effort to draw him from his retreat proved fruitless, though he manifested no hostility either by word or deed. The Spanish leader made diligent inquiry of the Indians he met with, if there was any province where gold and silver might be found. They replied that there was a country to the westward called Ocali, the inhabitants of which were continually at war with the people of another province, where the Spring lasted all the year long, and gold was so plenty that their warriors wore head-pieces of that precious metal.*

1539. After Hernando de Soto, had despatched Gallegos to explore the country, he received intelligence that the Cacique Hirihigua was concealed in a forest at no great distance from the camp. The Governor was about to send a captain with an armed force in quest of him, when the enterprise was claimed by Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa. This

* Portuguese Narrative. c. 10.

brave old cavalier had a passion for military exploits, and was withal, a little vain-glorious. He thought this a fit opportunity to signalize himself, and insisted upon having the honour of capturing the formidable though fugitive Cacique. His desire being acceded to, he prepared for it in his usual way, being fond of parade, and liberal in all his appointments. Having selected a band of horsemen and foot soldiers, he put himself at their head and sallied from the camp, well mounted, and cased in glittering armour, boasting that he would bring home Hirrihigua either a prisoner or a friend.*

He had not proceeded far, however, when he was met by an Indian messenger, sent by Hirrihigua, who had received intelligence from his spies of the armed force, marching in quest of him. This messenger entreated Vasco Porcallo on the part of Hirrihigua, not to proceed further, as the Cacique was in so secure a fortress that, with all his exertions, the Spanish leader would be unable to obtain an entrance: but that both he and his

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1, L. 2. c. 9. Herrera. Hist. Ind. Decad. 6, L. 7, c. 10.

troops would be exposed to infinite perils from the rivers, morasses and tangled forests, which they would have to pass. The Cacique added, that he gave this advice, not through any fear for himself, but in consequence of the forbearance manifested by the Spaniards, in not injuring his territory, or his subjects.

Vasco Porcallo listened to the messenger with incredulity; persuading himself that fear, not gratitude, nor courtesy dictated the message: he therefore ordered, the trumpet to sound, and marched on. As he advanced messenger after messenger met him, all repeating the warning to return, and at length these became so numerous as almost to overtake each other. The more, however, he was warned to return, the more obstinately did the stout hearted, but hot headed old soldier persist in advancing: taking every thing by contraries, and judging of the Cacique's panic, by the frequency of his messages. His only fear was that the prize might escape him. Under this impression, he spurred on hotly with his troops, until they arrived at a vast and dangerous morass.

Here his men perceived the truth of the warnings they had received, and began to remonstrate upon the danger of attempting

the morass. Vasco Porcallo, however, had put himself too much on his mettle in this enterprise, to be easily daunted. He insisted upon their entering ; but, knowing from experience the effect of setting an example in time of difficulty, he put spurs to his horse, dashed forward, and his men followed him pell mell into the morass. Vasco Porcallo had not proceeded far, however, when, coming to a deep part of the swamp, his horse floundered and fell. The peril of the Lieutenant-General was imminent ; his horse had fallen upon one of its rider's legs so as to fix him down, while the weight of his armour contributed to sink him into the mire. Both horse and rider were in danger of suffocation, nor could any one afford them relief, as all who entered would be exposed to similar peril.

At length the cavalier having, with infinite difficulty, extricated himself and steed from the bog, stood once more on firm ground, covered with mud. All his vain glory was at an end, he was out of humour with himself, and felt humbled in the sight of his soldiers. The savage whom he had come to fight and capture, instead of encountering him with deadly weapons, had conquered him by courteous

and friendly messages, and his vain-glorious enterprize had ended in a struggle in a quagmire.

Ordering his men to face^o about, he set out on his return to the camp, in a far different mood from that in which he had sallied forth. Amidst the mortifications of his present plight, he called to mind the comfortable home he had left behind, at Cuba, and the easy life he had led there. He reflected that he was no longer a boy; that the vigour of his days was past; that his present disaster was but a slight foretaste of the toils and troubles which must attend this expedition of conquest; and came at length to the conclusion, that as he was not obliged to encounter them, he had better return home, and leave the Conquest of Florida to the younger adventurers who were embarked in it.

Revolving these and similar thoughts in his mind, the worthy old cavalier, all bedabbled, bemired, and totally crest fallen, rode along in querulous, yet half whimsical humour, muttering to himself.

Vasco Porcallo arrived at the camp in a state of moody dissatisfaction. All his dreams of conquest were at an end. The martial fire,

which he had caught from the young soldiers of the army, and which had blazed up so suddenly in his bosom, had been as suddenly extinguished. He only thought now, how to get rid of his command of Lieutenant-General, and return to his comfortable home in Cuba. With these views he presented himself at once before De Soto, and stating his reasons with honest force and hearty sincerity, applied for permission to resign. The Governor granted it with the same promptness, with which he had accepted his offer to join the enterprise, and moreover, furnished him with the galliot San Anton to convey him back to the island.

The worthy veteran was now as eager to abandon the expedition, as he had been to join it. His train of servants, Spanish, Indian, and negro, were embarked with all speed; but when the gallant old cavalier came to take leave of his young companions in arms, and the soldiers he had lately aspired to lead so vain-gloriously, his generous spirit displayed itself. He divided among the officers and knights all the arms, accoutrements, horses, and camp equipage with which he had come so ostentatiously provided; and he gave for the

use of the expedition all the stores which he had purchased for himself and his retinue. He then set sail for Cuba, much to the regret of the army, who lamented that so gallant a cavalier was about to be withdrawn from their confederation.

The only person who remained behind of Vasco Porcallo's retinue was Gomez Suarez de Figueroa, his natural son, by an Indian woman in Cuba, with whom he left two horses arms, and other necessaries. Throughout this expedition, this youth conducted himself as a good knight and soldier, and a worthy son of such a father, serving with great promptitude upon all occasions.*

*The Inca. P. I, L. 2, c. 11.

CHAPTER X.

De Soto leaves Pedro Calderon with a garrison in Hirihigua and sets out on his march into the interior—The difficulties he encountered—Gonzalo Silvestre sent back with a message to Calderon.

1539. On the day after the departure of Vasco Porcallo, a young cavalier named Gonzalo Silvestre, followed by three other horsemen, rode into the camp, bearing dispatches from Baltazar de Gallegos. They brought favourable accounts of the country he had explored, with assurances that, in the village of Urribarracaxi and its neighbourhood, there were provisions enough to sustain the army for several days.

There was but one drawback on this favourable intelligence, which was, that beyond the town of Urribarracaxi there extended a vast

swamp, exceedingly difficult to be traversed. The Spaniards, however, ripe for action and adventure, made light of this obstacle, averring that God had provided man with genius and dexterity to make his way through every difficulty.

Satisfied from the dispatches just received, that he might readily penetrate into the interior, the Governor issued orders for every one to prepare for marching on the fourth day. In the mean time he commanded Gonzalo Silvestre to return to Baltazar de Gallegos with twenty horsemen, and inform him that the army would join him without further delay.

As there was a great quantity of arms, ammunition, and provisions in the village of Hirihigua, a garrison of forty horsemen and eighty foot soldiers, was left there under the command of Pedro Calderon, who had charge also of the shipping in the harbour, consisting of a caravel and two brigantines with their crews.

They were enjoined to remain quiet, and not move to any other place without orders from De Soto; to cultivate peace with the neighbouring Indians, and not make war upon them even though they should be taunted and

insulted;—above all, to treat Mucozo with marked friendship.

Having made these arrangements, and trusting, as well he might, in Pedro Calderon as a good soldier and discreet Captain, on the appointed day, De Soto set out with his main force, from the village of Hirrihigua. It was an arduous task to conduct such a body of troops, encumbered with armour and all kinds of baggage and supplies, through a wilderness, exposed to constant hardships, unforeseen dangers, and a wild kind of warfare, to which most of his soldiers were entirely unaccustomed.

As it was a leading object with the Governor, to found a colony, he was encumbered with many things that embarrassed the march of his army. Among these were three hundred swine, with which he intended to stock the country should he succeed in forming a settlement, having found them the most advantageous stock for the subsistence of new colonies. These animals were placed in charge of a company of horse, to keep them in the line of march, and guard them while traversing the swamps and rivers.

Besides the match-locks and cross-bows

with which the infantry were armed, there was one piece of ordnance in the army, that must have cost them vast labour to transport, though it appears never to have rendered any efficient service.

After two days' march, to the north-east, on the morning of the third day De Soto, came in sight of the village of Mucozo. The Cacique came forth to receive him, expressing great grief at his intended departure from the country, and entreating him to remain that night in his village. The Governor, however, excused himself, not wishing to task the hospitality of this generous Indian with such a multitude of guests, but again expressed his thanks for the kindness shown by the Cacique to Juan Ortiz, and commended to his friendship the Captain and soldiers who remained in garrison at the village of Hirrihigua. The Cacique promised to observe the strictest amity towards them. He then took leave of De Soto, his principal officers and cavaliers, with many embraces and tears, praying that the sun might shine upon them throughout their journey, and prosper them in all their undertakings. The Spaniards, were greatly affected at parting with this amiable

savage, who had in all things proved himself so disinterested a friend.

On arriving at the village of Urribarracaxi, De Soto found Baltazar de Gallegos waiting to receive him. The Caciqué, however, still remained in the fastnesses of the forest, and though the Governor sent envoys with offers of peace and friendship, nothing could draw him from his place of refuge.

A grand obstacle now lay in the way by which the Spaniards were to proceed. About three leagues from the village extended a great morass, a league in width, two thirds mire and one third water, and very deep at the borders. Runners were dispatched in three different directions to discover a pass, which they succeeded in doing after several days' search. By this pass the army crossed with ease, although it took a whole day to do so.

They now arrived on a broad plain, and sent runners before them to explore the route. The latter returned next day, declaring that they could not proceed on account of the numerous bogs caused by streams flowing from the great morass and inundating the country. Upon hearing this, the Governor determined to seek a road himself. Choosing there-

fore, a hundred horse and as many foot soldiers, he left the rest of the army where they were, under the temporary command of Luis de Moscoso, and re-crossing the great swamp, travelled three days along one side of it, sending runners at different intervals, to seek for some outlet.

During these three days, the Indians incessantly sallied from the woods which skirted the swamp, discharged their arrows at the Spaniards and retreated to their thickets. Some of the savages, however, were killed and others taken prisoners. The latter were used as guides, but they led the troops into difficult passes, and places where their countrymen were lurking in ambush. Discovering their perfidy, the Spaniards let loose their dogs, which killed four of them. Fearing a similar fate, an Indian offered to guide them in safety, and accordingly, after a wide circuit, brought them to a place free from mud, but where they had to proceed breast high in water for the distance of a league. Reaching the middle of the channel, they found it too deep to be forded. Here the natives had constructed a rude bridge, by felling two large trees into the water; and, where these did not unite, the space was supplied by logs united

by means of transverse poles. By this bridge, Pamphilo de Narvaez and his unfortunate army had passed ten years before.

Hernando de Soto, summoning two soldiers, named Pedro Moron and Diego de Oliva, half-breeds of the Island of Cuba, who were expert swimmers, ordered them to take hatchets and cut away several branches which obstructed the passage of the bridge, and remove all other impediments.

Moron and De Oliva, set to work with all diligence, but in the midst of their labour, several canoes appeared from among the rushes filled with savages, who galled the workmen with a flight of arrows. The two soldiers plunged headlong from the bridge, swam under water and came up near their comrades. They were but slightly wounded, for being under the surface of the stream, the force of the arrows was broken and they did not penetrate deeply. After this sudden onset, the Indians retired. The Spaniards repaired the bridge without being again molested, and a short distance above, discovered a good ford for the horses.

Having thus succeeded in the object of his search, the Governor summoned Gonzalo

Silvestre, one of the most hardy and spirited of his youthful cavaliers, and the best mounted of his troop. "To your lot," said he, "has fallen the best horse in the army, you will in consequence, have the more work to do, as I shall assign to you the most difficult tasks that may occur. It is important to the preservation of our lives and to the success of our enterprise, that you return this night to the camp. Desire Luis de Moscoso to follow us with the whole army, and immediately dispatch you with provisions, to sustain us until we can procure food; for you well know that our need is great. In order that your return may be rendered the more safe, desire him to give you thirty lances as an escort. I will wait for you at this place until to-morrow night; return therefore, without delay. The road may seem long and difficult, and the time short, but I know to whom I entrust the undertaking. If you desire a companion, select whom you please, and depart at once, for you should be at the camp before day-break; because if the day dawn before you have passed the swamp, the Indians may capture and kill you."

The very peril of the mission put the youth-

ful Silvestre upon his metal. Without answering a word he left the Governor, vaulted into his saddle, and was already on the way when he encountered one Juan Lopez Cacho, a native of Seville, and page of the Governor, who had an excellent horse. Silvestre immediately addressing him, said gaily—"the General has ordered that you and I deliver a message at the camp before day-break; follow me, therefore, immediately, for I am already on the road."

"Take some other person, I entreat you," said Lopez, "I am fatigued, and cannot undertake the journey."

"As you please," replied Silvestre, "his Excellency ordered me to choose a companion, and I have selected you. If you are so disposed, come; if not, remain. Your company will not diminish the danger, nor will my going alone increase the toil." So saying he put spurs to his horse and continued on his way. Juan Lopez, though much against his will, leaped into his saddle and galloped after him.

CHAPTER XI.

The perilous journey of Gonzalo Silvestre, and his friend, Juan Lopez.

1539. THE sun was just setting as Gonzalo Silvestre and his comrade, Juan Lopez, departed on their hazardous mission. These youthful cavaliers were well matched in spirit, hardihood, and valour. Neither of them had yet attained his twenty-first year.

They galloped rapidly over the first four or five leagues, the road being free from forests, swamps, or streams. In all that distance they did not perceive a single Indian. No sooner, however, had they crossed this open tract, than their difficulties and dangers began. Being ignorant of the country, they were obliged to trace back, step by step, the track they had pursued three days previously,

through bog and brake, brambles and forests, and across a labyrinth of streams flowing from the great morass; guiding themselves by the landmarks they had noticed on their previous march. In this toilsome journey they were aided by the instinct of their horses. These sagacious animals traced the road by which they had come, keeping their noses just above the ground in order to discover the track, like spaniels or setter dogs, upon the scent of game. Their riders, not understanding this unusual action, checked them with the reins to raise their heads. If at any time the horses lost the track, the moment they recovered it, they puffed and snorted, which alarmed their masters, who dreaded being overheard by the savages*.

* The Inca is curiously minute in his account of these horses. "The steed of Gonzalo Silvestre," says he, "was the most sure in the track, and certain to discover it when lost. However," he adds, "we must not be surprised at this excellent quality, and many others which this horse possessed; for, his marks and colour proved him admirably fitted either for peace or war. He was a dark chesnut of a pitchy shade, with white on one of his left feet, and striped above the nostrils;—marks which promise more excellence and gentleness than any other. The dark chestnut colour, especially

Gonzalo Silvestre, comprehending at length the intention of his horse when it lowered its head, gave it the rein, without attempting to guide it. Encountering these and many other difficulties, the two daring youths travelled all night, half dead with hunger, worn out with excessive fatigue, and almost overcome by sleep. Their horses were in no better plight, as they had not been unsaddled for three days, the bits being merely taken from their mouths occasionally, in order that they might graze.

At times they passed within sight of large fires, round which savages were seen stretched in wild and fantastic groupes, some capering and singing,—making the silent forests ring with their hideous yells. These Indians were probably celebrating one of their festivals with war-dances. The deafening din which they raised was the safeguard of the Spaniards, as it prevented the savages from hearing the barking

when of a pitchy hue, is above all others the most excellent, either for light or heavy labour. The steed of Juan Lopez Cachero, was of a light bay, commonly called fox colour, and his extremities were black, excellent marks, but inferior to the dark chesnut colour.”—Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1, L. 2, c. 14.

of their dogs, and the trampling of their horses as they passed*.

Thus they journeyed for more than ten leagues. Juan Lopez was repeatedly so much overpowered by sleep, that he proposed they should halt, and take some repose, but Silvestre resolutely refused. At length poor Lopez could contain himself no longer. "Let me sleep for a short time," said he, "or kill me with your lance on the spot, for I cannot possibly keep my saddle."

"Dismount then, and sleep, if you please," said Silvestre, "since you had rather run the risk of being butchered, than bear up an hour longer. According to the distance we have travelled, we cannot be far from the pass of the swamp which we must cross before dawn; for, if the light discovers us in this place, our death is certain."

Juan Lopez made no reply, but fell upon the ground like a lifeless body. His companion took from him his lance, and held his horse by the bridle. Night now rapidly drew on—the clouds discharged a deluge of rain, but nothing could awaken Juan Lopez from his death-like slumber.

* The Inca, P. 1, L. 2, c. 14.

As the rain ceased, the clouds dispersed, and Silvestre found that the day had dawned. As this was an unexpected discovery, it is probable that he had been unconsciously sleeping in his saddle. Startled at beholding the light, he hastened to call Lopez, but finding that the low tones in which he spoke, were insufficient to rouse him, he made use of his lance, and gave him some hearty blows, calling out, "Look what your sleeping has brought upon us; daylight has overtaken us, and left us little chance of escape from our enemies!"

Juan Lopez, awakened at last by this summary process, sprang into his saddle, and they set off at a hand-gallop. Fortunately for them, the horses were of such bottom, that, notwithstanding past fatigue, they were still in good spirits. The light revealed the two cavaliers to their foes, who began to yell and howl from every part of the morass. This was accompanied with a frightful din, caused by the mingled clangour of drums, trumpets, conches, and other rude instruments of warlike music.

A perilous league remained to be travelled over an expanse of water, which the horses would have to ford. Before the Spaniards reached it, they beheld canoes darting from

thickets and cane-brakes, until the water seemed covered with them. They saw the imminent danger that awaited them in the water, after having escaped so many perils on land; but, knowing that their safety depended wholly upon their courage, they dashed boldly into the stream; seeking to cross it with all speed. During their adventurous passage the Indians discharged clouds of arrows at them. Fortunately they were cased in armour, and their horses nearly covered with water, so that they both escaped without wounds, though they declared that, on reaching land, and looking back, the whole surface of the stream appeared to be strewed with arrows.

The savages continued to pursue them on land, plying their bows, and discharging flights of arrows after them, when suddenly a body of thirty horsemen came galloping to their rescue, headed by the gallant Nuño Tobar, on his dapple grey charger. The wild cries and yells of the Indians having reached the army, had caused a surmise that some of their companions were in danger, and Nuño Tobar had immediately proposed this sally to their rescue; for that generous cavalier, now, that he was out of favour with his general, with the pride of a

noble spirit, seemed to pique himself the more on signalizing himself by worthy deeds. .

At sight of Nuño Tobar, and his band, the Indians gave over the pursuit; and fearing to be trampled down by the horses, fled to the thickets and morass for safety.

CHAPTER XII.

Thirty lancers sally forth with supplies for the Governor
—The haughty speech of the Cacique Acuera—The
Governor arrives in the province of Ocali—Occurrences
there.

1539. THE two adventurous troopers reached the army in safety, and were received with acclamations by their comrades. On learning their errand, Luis de Moscoso, the Camp-Master-General, immediately ordered two horses to be laden with supplies for the Governor and his troops, and thirty horsemen to accompany them as an escort. With this band Gonzalo Silvestre set out on his return, without having reposed an hour in the camp, or taken scarcely any refreshment. His friend, Juan Lopez, however, remained behind, excusing himself under the plea that the Governor had neither ordered him to go nor return.

The thirty horsemen passed the morass with out opposition from the Indians, and travelled all day without seeing an enemy. With all their speed, however, they could not reach the place at which the Governor had promised to wait for them, until two hours after night-fall, when, to their great vexation, they found the late encamping ground deserted. Ignorant of the route taken by the General, this little band made arrangements for passing the night upon the spot where their comrades had lately encamped. Being exposed to the attacks of hords of lurking savages, constant vigilance was necessary. They divided their party, therefore, into three bands of ten men each. One of these detachments mounted and armed for action, went the rounds the first third of the night; another kept watch at the encampment, with their horses at hand, saddled, bridled, and ready to be mounted; the third merely took the bridles off their steeds, and, suffering the saddles to remain on, turned the horses loose to graze while they snatched a brief repose. In this manner, they lightened their toils, going the rounds, watching and sleeping by turns, and the night passed without molestation from any enemy.

As soon as day dawned they sought the tract of the General and his troop, and following it, came to the second pass of the morass where they found the Indian bridge. Here, having to advance a considerable distance, breast high in water, they thought themselves in imminent peril from the Indians, who might hover about them in their canoes and assail them with flights of arrows ; but to their great joy they accomplished the whole passage without sustaining any assault. This capricious conduct of the savages, one day attacking with blood-thirsty fury, and the next keeping entirely out of sight, occurred repeatedly throughout the whole of this expedition, and has been sometimes attributed to superstitious notions, such as the observance of lucky and unlucky days in their warfare.

Having travelled six leagues, the convoy came to a beautiful valley, in which were large fields of Indian corn, of such luxuriant growth as to bear three and four ears upon a stalk. The horsemen leaned down and plucked them as they rode along, eating them raw to appease their hunger. In this valley they found the Governor encamped, who received them joyfully, lavishing praises upon Silvestre for his

courage and hardihood, and promising to reward him for his services. He excused himself for not having waited at the appointed place, alleging the intolerable hunger of his troops, and their doubts whether Silvestre had not fallen into the hands of their enemies.

Within a few days, the Governor was joined by the remainder of the army, conducted by Luis de Moscoso. They had traversed the two passes of the morass with great toil and difficulty, but fortunately, without experiencing any hostility from the natives.

The fertile province in which the army was now encamped, lay twenty leagues to the north of that governed by Urribarracaxi, and was governed by a Cacique named Acuera, who, on the approach of the Spaniards, had fled with his people to the woods. Hernando de Soto sent Indian interpreters to this chief, representing the power of the Spaniards to do injury in war, and confer benefits in peace; declaring his disposition to befriend the natives, his only object being, by amicable means, to bring the people of this great country into obedience to his Sovereign, the powerful Emperor and King of Castile. He invited the Cacique, therefore, to a friendly interview in order to arrange a peaceful intercourse.

The Cacique returned a haughty reply. "Others of your accursed race," said he, "have in years past disturbed our peaceful shores. They have taught me what you are. What is your employment? To wander about like vagabonds from land to land—to rob the poor—to betray the confiding—to murder the defenceless in cold blood. No! with such a people I want neither peace nor friendship. War—never ending—exterminating war, is all I ask. You boast yourselves to be valiant—and so you may be—but my faithful warriors are not less brave—and of this you shall one day have proof, for I have sworn to maintain an unsparing conflict while one white man remains in my borders;—not openly in the battle field—though even thus we fear not to meet you—but by stratagem, ambush, and midnight surprisal."

In reply to the demand that he should yield obedience to the Emperor, the Chief replied: "I am king in my own land, and will never become the vassal of a mortal like myself. Vile and pusillanimous is he who submits to the yoke of another, when he may be free! As for me and my people, we prefer death to the loss of liberty, and the subjugation of our country!"

The governor, filled with admiration at the spirit of this savage chieftain, was more pressing than ever to gain his friendship: but to all his overtures the Cacique's answer was, that he had already made, the only reply he had to offer.

The army remained in this province twenty days, recruiting from the fatigues and privations of their past journey. During this time, the Governor sent persons in every direction to explore the country, and they returned with favourable reports.

During this time the Indians were not idle. To justify the bravadoes of their Cacique, they lurked in ambush about the camp, so that a Spaniard could not stray a hundred steps from it without being shot and instantly beheaded; if his companions hastened to his rescue, they found nothing but a headless trunk.

The Christians buried the bodies of their unfortunate comrades wherever they found them; but the savages invariably returned the following night, disinterred them, cut them up and hanged them upon trees. The heads they carried as trophies to their Cacique, according to his orders. Thus fourteen Spaniards perished, and a greater number were

wounded. In these skirmishes, the Indians ran comparatively little risk, as the Spanish encampment was skirted by a thicket, whither, after making an assault, the assailants could easily escape. In this manner the Spaniards saw effectually verified the threats of their ferocious foes, who had hung upon their rear during the march. "Keep on, robbers and traitors," they cried, "in Acuera and Apalachee we will treat you as you deserve. We will quarter and hang up every captive on the highest trees along the road."

Notwithstanding their great vigilance, the Spaniards did not kill more than fifty Indians, for the latter were extremely wary in their ambuscades.*

1539. The army reposed twenty days in the province of Acuera, during which period, De Soto permitted no injury to be done either to the hamlets, villages, or fields of grain : he then broke up his encampment, and set out in search of another province, about twenty leagues to the north-east, called Ocali,† —the same of which Gallegos had heard

* The Inca, P. 1, L. 2, c. 16. Herrera, D. 6, L. 7, c. 10:

† This name is spelt Cale by the Portuguese narrator.

at the village of Urribarracaxi. His way lay across a desert tract, about twelve leagues broad, interspersed with open forests of pine and other trees, free from underwood, through which the horsemen could ride at ease. The army then traversed seven leagues of inhabited country, where dwellings were scattered about the fields and woods. At length, they arrived at the principal village, called after the Cacique, Ocali, containing six hundred houses. The inhabitants, however, had abandoned it, and fled with their effects to the forests.

This province, being further from the sea coast, was less intersected by creeks and bays, which in other parts penetrated deeply into this low and level country, causing vast swamps, difficult and sometimes impossible to traverse. In some of the morasses, the surface appeared like firm and dry land, but on stepping upon it, it would tremble for twenty or thirty paces around, and on being trodden by horses would give way and engulf both horse and rider.

Besides being freer from swamps, the province of Ocali was more populous and fruitful than the other districts. This the Spaniards found to be the case, throughout the country, in proportion as the provinces were remote

from the sea. Their greatest sufferings during this expedition arose from the scarcity of animal food, as the natives did not breed domestic cattle;⁶ and, although deer and other game were abundant, the Indians only killed sufficient to supply their own immediate wants.

The Spaniards took up their quarters in the village of Ocali, where they found vast quantities of maize, vegetables and various kinds of fruits. De Soto sent three or four Indian messengers daily to the Cacique Ocali, endeavouring, in vain, to draw that chieftain from his retreat, with offers of friendship. With one of these messengers, there came to the camp, gaily decorated with plumes, four young Indian warriors, who manifested an eager curiosity to see the Spaniards, their dress, their arms, and above all, their horses. The Governor entertained them kindly, made them presents, and ordered that refreshments should be set before them.

They sat down and appeared to be eating very quietly, when, perceiving the Spaniards off their guard, they all rose suddenly together, and ran full speed to the woods. It was in vain to attempt a pursuit on foot, and there was no horse at hand.

A greyhound of uncommon sagacity, however, happened to be near ; hearing the cry of the savages, and seeing them run, it pursued them. Passing by the first whom it overtook, and likewise the second, and third, it sprang upon the shoulders of the foremost and pulled him to the ground ; meanwhile, the next Indian passed on, but the dog, quitting the man whom it had seized, leaped upon the other, and secured him in the same way. In like manner it served the third and fourth ; and then kept running from one to the other, pulling each down as fast as he rose, and barking so furiously, that the fugitives being terrified and confounded, the Spaniards were enabled to overtake and capture them. They were led back to the camp and examined separately, for as they were armed, the Spaniards apprehended treachery ; but, it appeared that their sudden flight was only an exploit to show their address and fleetness.

This same greyhound had signalized itself on another occasion, before the army reached Ocali. As several Indians and Spaniards were talking in a friendly way on the bank of a river, one of the former struck a Spaniard violently with his bow, and threw himself into

the water, all his companions following him. The dog immediately sprang in after them, but passed by several without molesting them, until it came to the one who had committed the assault, when, laying hold of him, it tore him to pieces.

CHAPTER XIII.

The fate of the Greyhound—The Spaniards enter the vast province of Vitachuco—Their reception there—The haughty message of the Cacique Vitachuco.

1539. AFTER repeated solicitations, the Cacique Ocali, at the end of six days, ventured from his place of refuge, and visited the camp, where he was treated with great courtesy and kindness, although the Spaniards doubted much the sincerity of his professions.

Close by the village ran a wide and deep river, with precipitous banks. Notwithstanding that it was the summer season, this river was too full of water to be fordable; it was, therefore, necessary to construct a wooden bridge, over which the army might pass. De Soto having treated with the Cacique for a number of his subjects to aid in its construction, went

to decide upon the spot where it should be erected. As they were walking along the bank of the stream, conferring on the subject, more than five hundred Indians suddenly started from among the bushes and thickets, on the opposite bank of the river, crying out fiercely, "you want a bridge, do you? merciless robbers! but you will never see it built by our hands!" Thus shouting, they discharged a volley of arrows towards the place where the Cacique and Governor were standing.

De Soto demanded the meaning of this outrage, having received from the Cacique pledges of his friendship. The latter replied, that these were a refractory party of his subjects, who had cast off their allegiance to him on account of his attachment to the Spaniards, and that he was not, therefore, answerable for their acts.

It happened that the greyhound already mentioned, was at hand, held in a leash by the Governor's page. No sooner did it hear the yells and see the menacing actions of the Indians, than it was furious to get at them. In its struggles, it threw the page upon the ground, and breaking loose, plunged into the stream. The Spaniards called it back in

vain. The savages knowing the injury it had done to their countrymen, were glad of an opportunity to revenge themselves. They showered their arrows about the dog as it swam, and with such dexterous aim, that more than fifty struck it about the head and shoulders, which were above the water. Still the courageous animal kept on, and reached the land, but had scarcely quitted the water when it fell dead. Its death was greatly lamented by the Governor and the whole army: for, it had been of signal service throughout the expedition, a vigilant guardian of the camp by night, and an effectual champion by day. It was one of a rare and renowned race of dogs, several of which were noted for their feats in the course of the Spanish discoveries and conquests.

1539. De Soto saw that the chieftain Ocali was but little esteemed by his subjects, who disobeyed his commands with impunity; and, thinking the neighbouring Caciques might suppose that he was detained against his will, he gave him permission to return to his people, and revisit the camp whenever it might please him. The Cacique gladly availed himself of this offer, but declared he only went in order to bring

his subjects into more perfect submission to the Governor, and as soon as he had accomplished this, that he would joyfully rejoin the Spaniards. With these and many similar professions he departed ; but never again showed his face in the camp.

Upon the Cacique's departure, the Spaniards commenced constructing a bridge over the river. The work was superintended by one Francisco, a Genoese, the only shipwright in the army. He was likewise skilled in all kinds of joiner's work, and by his art rendered incalculable services to the Spaniards throughout this expedition. Large planks were floated upon the water, and tied together with strong cords, which the Spaniards had brought with them for such emergencies ; the planks were then crossed with immense poles laid and fastened on the top. This rude bridge was of sufficient strength for the passage of both men and horses. Having captured thirty Indians to serve as guides, the army passed the river and set forward on their march.

After travelling about three days, the Governor putting himself in advance of the army, with a hundred horse, and the same number of foot, and pushing forward in the night, came

by daybreak to the frontiers of a province fifty leagues across, called Vitachuco. It was under the dominion of three brothers. The eldest, Vitachuco, bearing the name of the country over which he ruled, had five parts out of ten, the second brother governed three of the remaining five, and the youngest of the family, who was chief of the village of Ochile, and of the same name, possessed the remainder. This was contrary to the usage of the other provinces through which the Spaniards had passed, the eldest son generally inheriting all.

It was scarcely daybreak on the first day, when De Soto and his advanced corps arrived at the village of Ochile. It contained fifty large and strong habitations, being a frontier post, fortified against incursions from the adjacent provinces, with which it was at war.

De Soto and his little band rushed suddenly into the village, amid the clamorous sound of drum and trumpet, seized the Indians as, terrified and amazed, they came forth from their houses and surrounded the mansion of the Cacique. This was built in the form of one large pavilion, upwards of a hundred and twenty paces in length, and forty in breadth, having four doors,

and a number of smaller buildings connected with it like offices.

The Cacique had with him a guard of his principal warriors, and many others had hastened to his defence. He would have sallied forth and offered a vigorous resistance, but the Spaniards had possession of the doors, and threatened to fire the house. At length, by sun-rise, through the mediation of Indian prisoners and interpreters, he was persuaded to yield to the superior power of the Spaniards, and accept their offered friendship. De Soto received him kindly, but detained him, setting at liberty all the other prisoners, and ordering his soldiers to treat them in the most friendly manner.

The Governor, however, did not feel himself secure. The neighbourhood was populous; the savages seeing the small number of his band, might gather together, and attempt to rescue their Cacique. Taking that chieftain with him, therefore, and a number of his most faithful warriors, De Soto marched his detachment out of the village, and returned in quest of the main body of his troops. These he found encamped three leagues off, full of anxiety on account of their General's absence.

The day following, the army entered Ochile, in battle array ; the foot and horse formed into squadrons, with trumpets, fifes, and drums sounding. The troops being quartered, the Governor prevailed upon Ochile to send envoys to his two brothers, inviting them to accept the Spaniards' offer of peace, and warning them of the disastrous consequences that would attend a refusal.

The second brother who was nearest, readily embraced the proposal, and at the end of three days came accompanied by many of his warriors gaily decorated. After kissing the Governor's hands, he entered into familiar conversation with the officers and distinguished cavaliers of the army, asking the name of each, and bearing himself with as much ease and natural courtesy as if he had been brought up among them.

The elder brother, however, who was much the most powerful of the three, made no reply to the message, but detained the envoys by whom it had been conveyed. The two brothers, by the persuasion of De Soto sent other messengers, with still more urgent entreaties. They magnified the power of the Spaniards, whom they represented as children of the sun and moon, and their gods invincible—that they had come from a

remote region, where the sun rises in its brightest glory; and that they had with them animals called horses, so fleet, courageous and powerful, that it was impossible either to escape them by flight, or resist them by force.

The answer of Vitachuco is given at length by the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega ; though he quotes it from memory, after a lapse of years ; and declares that he cannot vouch for its being arranged exactly in the order in which it was delivered, or that it was the whole of what was said ; but pledges his word that, as far as it goes, it is truly the reply of the Cacique. He asserts that if it really was delivered as recounted by the envoys, none of the knights whom the divine Ariosto or his predecessor, the illustrious and enamoured Count Marec Maria Boyardo, have introduced into their works, could have equalled in fiery courage and indomitable spirit, this savage chieftain. Without claiming for it all the praise awarded by that ancient author, still it shows the haughty spirit of this wild warrior, whose gallant efforts were, however, of little avail against the Spanish invader.

1539. "It is evident enough," observes the Cacique in reply to the embassy of his brothers, "that you are young, and have neither judg-

ment nor experience, or you would never speak as you have done of these hated white men ! You extol them greatly as virtuous persons, who injure no one. You say that they are valiant—that they are children of the sun—that they merit all our reverence and service. The vile chains which they have hung upon you—the mean and dastardly spirit which you have acquired during the short period you have been their slaves, have caused you to speak like women, lauding what you should censure and abhor. You remember not, that these christians can be no better than those who formerly committed so many cruelties in our country. Are they not of the same nation and subject to the same laws ? Does not their manner of life prove them to be children of the Spirit of Evil, and not of the sun and the moon, our gods ? Go they not from land to land plundering and destroying ; taking the wives and daughters of the peaceable inhabitants instead of bringing their own with them ; and, like mere vagabonds, maintaining themselves by the laborious toil of others ? Were they virtuous, as you represent, they never would have left their own country, since there they might have practised those virtues which you extol ;

—there they might have cultivated the earth, maintained themselves without prejudice to others, or injury to themselves; instead of roving about the world committing robberies and murders, having neither shame of men nor fear of God.

“Warn them not to enter into my dominions, for I solemnly vow, valiant as they may be, that if they dare to set their feet upon my land, they shall never quit it alive—I will exterminate the whole race.”*

This was the first reply of the fierce Vitachuco; but he sent so many others, that every day there arrived two or three messengers, always sounding a trumpet, and each embassy conveying greater menaces than the preceding. The Cacique Vitachuco thought to terrify the strangers by the various and supernatural deaths, with which he menaced them. At one time he threatened, that the moment they entered his province, the earth should open and swallow them; that the hills by which the Spaniards would have to travel, should unite and bury them alive, that the trees of the forest through which they had

to pass, should be blown down and crush them; that flights of birds should hover over and pounce upon them, with corroding poison in their beaks. He finally threatened that he would command the water, herbs, trees, and even the air to be poisoned, in such a manner, that neither horse nor rider, man nor beast, should escape with life. Thus, he declared, he would make an example of them to all who should henceforth dare invade his territory.

These extravagancies provoked the laughter of the Spaniards, who considered them the empty bravadoes of a savage; but the deeds of Vitachuco afterwards showed that they were the furious menaces of a proud warrior; who, it is probable, was promised all these miracles by some native prophet.

These and many other messages arrived during eight days, spent by De Soto in traversing the domains of the two brothers, who did every thing in their power to gratify him and his army. They at length undertook a mission to Vitachuco. The fierce chieftain pretended to be finally won by their persuasions, and agreed to enter into friendly intercourse with the strangers; but desired first to know how many days they

intended to continue in his dominions, what quantity of provisions they would require when they departed, and what other things would be necessary for their journey.

The two brothers sent an envoy to De Soto with this message ; the latter replied, that they would not remain in the territory of Vitachuco longer than might be agreeable to him ; neither did they desire any provisions but what he might think fit to give them, nor should they require any thing except his friendship.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Cacique Vitachuco dissembles—His plot to destroy the Spaniards—Battle with Vitachuco.

1539. THE chieftain, Vitachuco, pretending to be well contented with the Governor's reply, and a day being fixed for their meeting, the Cacique ordered an abundant supply of provisions for the troops and horses to be brought from all parts of his domains, and deposited in the principal village.

On the appointed day of meeting, Vitachuco went from his capital, accompanied by his two brothers and five hundred Indian warriors, adorned with plumes of various colours, and armed with bows and arrows of the finest workmanship. At the distance of two leagues, they found the Governor encamped with his army in a beautiful valley.

Their meeting was cordial, and the Cacique endeavoured to atone for past threats, by professions of present friendship and promises of future services, all which were graciously received by De Soto.

Vitachuco was about thirty-five years of age, of lofty stature, and strongly formed, as the Indians of Florida generally were; his countenance expressing the bravery of his spirit.

The ensuing day, the Spaniards entered the principal village in order of battle. It bore the name of its chief, and consisted of two hundred houses, large and strong, besides many other of smaller size in the suburbs. The Governor, his body guards and servants, together with the two brother Caciques, lodged in the house of Vitachuco, as it was sufficiently spacious to accommodate them all.

Two days were passed in feasting. On the third day, the two brothers of Vitachuco having obtained leave to return to their respective territories, departed well pleased with the good treatment, and numerous presents they had received from the Spaniards.

After their departure, Vitachuco redoubled his courtesy to the strangers, and seemed as if he thought he could not do enough to serve

them. Five days only had elapsed, however, when Juan Ortiz came to the Governor, and informed him of a perfidious plot devised by the Cacique, which had been revealed to him by four of the native interpreters. Having selected several thousand of his bravest warriors, Vitachuco had ordered them to conceal their weapons in a thicket near the village, and appear at all times unarmed, so as to throw the Spaniards off their guard. On an appointed day, it was arranged that the Cacique should invite De Soto to a general muster of his subjects, drawn up in battle array, though without weapons, in order that he might see what a numerous force of Indian allies he had at his command for future conquests.

Trusting from the good understanding existing between them, that the Governor would go forth carelessly and alone, a dozen of the most powerful Indians had received orders, suddenly to seize and bear him into the midst of their warriors; who, assuming their arms, were to attack the Spaniards in their camp. Thus, between the surprise of the sudden assault, and their dismay at the capture of their General, the Cacique calculated upon an easy conquest: in which case, he intended to make good his extra-

gant menaces, and inflict on his prisoners all kinds of cruel, and tormenting deaths.

The Adelantado having been made acquainted with Vitachuco's perfidy, consulted with his Captains, and the result was a determination to seize Vitachuco precisely in the same manner as the latter had planned to seize the Governor ;—he would thus fall into his own snare. For this purpose, twelve of the stoutest soldiers were selected, to be near De Soto when he should go forth to view the Indian army. These at a certain signal, were to make the Cacique prisoner. Every thing being secretly arranged, the Spaniards watched Vitachuco's movements, at the same time, maintaining an appearance of careless unconcern.

The day so much desired having arrived, Vitachuco came to the Governor early in the morning, and with much humility and seeming veneration, begged him to confer a great favour on himself and subjects, by quitting his camp to behold them arranged in order of battle, when he would see the number of his faithful allies, and have an opportunity of judging whether they knew how to form their squadrons, as well as his own troops, who were reported to be so eminently skilled in the art of war.

De Soto replied, with an unsuspicious air, that he should rejoice greatly to see them; but in order to make the display more striking, and furnish the Indians likewise with a spectacle worth beholding, he would command a mock fight among his horse and foot soldiers for Vitachuco's entertainment.

The Cacique did not much relish this proposal, but blinded by his passions, he agreed to the arrangement; trusting to the number and valour of his vassals to overthrow the Spaniards, however well prepared.

All things being arranged, the Spaniards marched out, horse and foot, in battle array, with glittering arms and fluttering banners. The Governor remained behind, to accompany the Cacique on foot, in order the better to disguise his knowledge of the latent treason. He went, however, secretly armed, and ordered two of his finest horses to be led caparisoned for service. One of these, is especially mentioned as a beautiful and spirited animal. It was named Acēytuño, after a brave cavalier who had made it a present to the Governor.

Near the village was an extensive plain, bounded on one side by an extensive

forest, and on the other,* by two lakes; one of which, about a league in circumference, was clear of trees, but so deep, that three or four feet from the bank no footing could be found: the other at a greater distance from the village, was more than half a league in width, and appeared like a vast river, extending as far as the eye could reach. Between the forest and these two lakes, the Indians formed their squadrons, having the latter on their right flank, and the former on their left. Their bows and arrows were concealed in the grass, that they might appear to be totally unarmed. Their force amounted to ten thousand chosen warriors, decorated with lofty plumes, which increased their apparent height; and, being drawn out with somewhat of military order, they made a magnificent display.

The Cacique and Hernando de Soto appeared on foot, each accompanied by twelve of his retinue, and each secretly having the same hostile determination against the other. The Spanish troops were to the right of the Governor; the infantry being drawn up near to the forest, and the cavalry marshalled upon the plain.

Between nine and ten o'clock in the morning,

De Soto and Vitachuco arrived at the spot, which the latter had fixed upon for seizing of the Governor. Before the former, however, could make his preconcerted signal, a Spanish trumpet gave a warning blast.* In an instant twelve Spaniards rushed upon the Cacique. His attendants threw themselves before him, and endeavoured to repel the assailants, but in vain. He was borne off amid the shouts of his captors.

DeSoto leaped, at the same moment, upon his favourite steed Aceytuño, and spurred among the thickest of the enemy, with that headlong valour which always distinguished him in battle. The savages had already seized their weapons. Their front ranks were thrown into confusion by the impetuous charge of De Soto ; but as he pressed forward, a shower of arrows came whistling round him. They were principally aimed at his horse, the Indians always seeking to kill these animals, knowing their importance in battle. Four arrows wounded the generous animal in the knees, four pierced it in the

● * Narrative, c. 11.

breast, and it fell to the earth dead, as if shot by a piece of artillery.*

The Spanish troops, who, at the trumpet signal, had assailed the native squadrons, came, at this critical moment, to the aid of their General. One of his pages, named Viota, a youth of noble birth, sprang from his horse and assisted the Governor to mount it. Once more on horseback, he put himself at the head of his cavalry, and spurred among the enemy. The latter had no lances to defend themselves; and, being assailed* by three hundred horse, broke and fled in every direction. A great number of those who were in the rear, took refuge among the entangled thickets of the forest; some threw themselves into the large lake and escaped, others scattered themselves indiscriminately over the plain, where more than three hundred were killed, and a few made prisoners.

A worse fate attended the enemy's vanguard, composed of his bravest warriors; who are always doomed to fare the worst in battle.

* Herrera. Decad. 6. L. 7, c. 11. Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1, L. 2. c. 23. Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

After receiving the first impetuous charge of the cavalry, they fled, but, unable to reach either the forest or the larger lake, more than nine hundred threw themselves into the smaller one. Here they were surrounded by the Spaniards, who endeavoured by threats, promises, and occasional shots from their cross bows, and arquebusses, to induce them to surrender. The Indians replied only by flights of arrows. As the lake was too deep to give them footing, they adopted a mode of defence as singular as it was desperate. Three or four clung together, and supported each other by swimming, while one mounted upon their backs, and plied his bow and arrows. In this way an incessant skirmishing was kept up all day. Numbers of Indians were slain, and all their arms exhausted, yet no one expressed a desire to surrender.

At night the Spaniards posted themselves near each other, round the lake, the horse by two and two, the foot in parties of six, lest the savages should escape in the dark. Some of the latter endeavoured to save themselves by covering their heads with the leaves of water lilies, and swimming noiselessly to land; but, the watchful troopers per-

ceiving that the water was agitated, spurred their horses to the bank, and drove their enemies back again into the channel,* in hope of tiring them out, and thus forcing them to capitulate. They, moreover, threatened them with death, if they did not yield, but offered them peace, if they would surrender.

So obstinate were they, however, that it was midnight before any of them submitted, although they had been fourteen hours in the water. At length, the intercessions of Juan Ortiz, and of the four Indian interpreters, began to have effect. The most weary came on shore, one and two at a time, but so slowly, that by the dawn of day not more than fifty had surrendered. The remainder seeing that these were kindly treated, and being persuaded by them, now gave themselves up in greater numbers, but still with extreme reluctance. Some when near the bank returned to the middle of the lake, until the love of life compelled them to yield. At ten o'clock, two hundred landed at the same time, and surrendered themselves, after having been in the water four and twenty hours. They

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

were in a wretched condition, swollen with the water they had swallowed, and overcome with fatigue, hunger, and want of sleep. There yet remained in the lake, seven Indians of such indomitable spirit, that neither the entreaties of the interpreters, the promises of the Governor, nor the example of their comrades, who had surrendered, had any effect upon them.* They treated all promises with scorn, defying both menaces and death. Thus they remained until three o'clock in the afternoon, and would, no doubt, have remained there until they had died; but the Governor, struck with admiration of their magnanimity, thought it would be inhuman to allow such brave men to perish, and consequently, ordered twelve Spaniards, who were expert swimmers, to go into the lake with their swords in their mouths, and drag them out by main force. As they were too much exhausted to resist, the Spaniards seized them by the legs, arms, and hair, drew them to land, and placed them upon the bank, where they lay extended, more dead than alive;† having, according to the Spanish

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

† The Portuguese Narrative adds, that they were immediately put into irons. The Inca's account, however,

narrator, been thirty hours in the water, apparently without putting their feet to the ground or receiving any relief:—an exploit, adds the Inca historian, almost incredible, and which I should not dare to record, but upon the authority of several cavaliers and nobles, who both in the Indies, and in Spain, assured me of its truth, confirming the authenticity of this extraordinary feat, related to me by a person, in all things, worthy of belief.

The reader, however, without questioning the veracity of the cavaliers, may surmise that the savages had been enabled, from time to time, to snatch a few moments repose, on shallows near the banks of the lake.

The heroic obstinacy of the seven Indians, had extorted the admiration of the Spaniards. Moved to compassion by their present deplorable state, they bore them to the camp; and used such assiduous means for their recovery, that they were restored to animation in the course of the night.

On the following morning, De Soto summoned them before him, and pretending to be angry,

of the conduct of the Spaniards towards these brave warriors, is more in accordance with the generous character of De Soto.

demanding the reason of their desperate resistance, and why they had not surrendered as their companions had done.

Four of them, in the prime of manhood, replied, that they were leaders, chosen by their Cacique, from his confidence in their courage and constancy. Their actions were to justify his choice. They were bound to set an example to their children, to their brother warriors, and above all, to such as should thenceforth be appointed to command. They felt that they had failed in fulfilling their duty, and in vindicating their honour; and while they acknowledged the kindness of the Governor, regretted only that he had not left them to perish in the lake. "If you want to add to your favours," said they, "take our lives. After surviving the defeat and capture of our chieftain, we are not worthy to appear before him, or survive his dishonour."*

The Governor listened with admiration to these savage warriors; and when they had finished, turned to their three companions, who had remained silent. These were young men,

* Garcilaso de la Vega. P. 1, L. 2, c. 25. Herrera. Decad. 6, L. 7, c. 11.

not more than eighteen years old, sons and heirs of Caciques holding dominion over the adjacent provinces. De Soto demanded their reason for persisting so desperately in their defence, as they were not leaders, nor bound by the same obligations, as their companions.

They replied with a proud and lofty air, that they had been incited to hostility, not through a desire of gain, or any implacable spirit against the Spaniards, but, merely from a thirst for glory :—that although they were not chiefs, yet as the sons of Caciques, and destined one day to be Caciques themselves, they felt especially bound to signalize themselves by bravery in action, and by a contempt for suffering and death. “These, O offspring of the sun !” said they, “are the reasons for our obstinate hostility : if they are sufficient in your eyes, pardon us ; if not, we are at your mercy. Strike us dead, for nothing is prohibited to the conqueror.”

The brave spirit and heroic sentiments of these generous youths, charmed all the Spaniards present ; and their hearts were touched at seeing them exposed so young, to such adversity. The Governor, likewise, who was of a compassionate nature, was moved to pity. He arose

and embraced them as if they had been his own sons ; commending their valour and heroism, which he considered as proofs at once of noble blood, and of illustrious descent.

He detained them in the camp two days, feasting them at his table, and treating them with every mark of distinction ; he then dismissed them with presents of linen, cloths, silks, mirrors, and other articles of Spanish manufacture. He also sent by them presents to their fathers and other relatives, with offers of his friendship. The young Caciques took leave of him with many expressions of gratitude, and departed joyfully for their homes, accompanied by a number of their countrymen whom the Governor had liberated.

The four captive leaders, were retained prisoners, and on the following day summoned before the Governor, with their Cacique Vitachuco. De Soto reproached them all with the treacherous and murderous plot they had devised against him and his soldiers, at a time when they were professing the kindest friendship. Such treason, he observed, merited death : yet, wishing to give the natives a proof of his clemency, he pardoned them, and restored them to his favour. He

warned them, however, to beware how they again deceived him or his army, lest they should provoke him to take a terrible revenge.

The Indians who had come out of the lake and surrendered themselves, were distributed among the Spaniards to serve them as menials, so long as their conquerors should remain in the province. This was partly as a punishment for their participation in the late treason, and partly to deter the neighbouring tribes from like aggressions.

CHAPTER XV.

Death of Vitachuco and his warriors.

1539. VITACHUCO now remained in some sort a prisoner in his own house, but was treated with great kindness and respect, and dined at the Governor's table. Rage and hatred, however, still rankled in his heart; and he soon conceived another scheme of vengeance. Nine hundred of his bravest warriors, were dispersed among the Spaniards; equalling the latter in number, and, as he thought, in personal prowess. They attended their new masters as slaves, and as the Spaniards, when at their meals were seated, off their guard, and many of them without weapons, the Cacique conceived that at such a moment it would be easy, by a preconcerted movement, for his subjects

to strike a signal blow that should rid them at once of their oppressors.

Scarcely had Vitachuco conceived this rash scheme, than he hastened to put it into operation. He had four young Indians who attended him as pages. These he sent to the principal prisoners revealing his plan, with orders that they should pass it secretly from one to another, and hold themselves in readiness, at the appointed time, to carry it into effect. The dinner hour of the third day was the time fixed upon for striking the blow. As Vitachuco would be dining with the Governor, and the Indians, in general attending upon their respective masters, the Cacique was to watch his opportunity, spring upon De Soto and kill him; giving, at the moment of assault, a war-whoop that should resound throughout the village. This was to be the signal for every Indian in the place to grapple with his master, or any other Spaniard, and despatch him on the spot.

Many of the poor natives saw the perfect madness of this second project; but, accustomed to yield implicit obedience to their chief, they promised to carry it into execution or perish in the attempt.

On the day fixed, Vitachuco dined as usual at the table of the Governor, who sought to win his friendship by the kindest attentions. When the repast was concluded, the savage stretched himself upon the bench on which he had been seated, and twisting his body from side to side, projected first one arm, then the other, to its full extent, clenching his fists, and drawing them up so that they rested on his shoulders ; he then jerked out his arms two or three times, until every joint cracked liked a snapped reed. In this way the Indians of Florida used to rally their strength when about to perform any extraordinary feat.

After this preparation, the Cacique sprang upon his feet, closed instantly with the Governor, at whose side he had been sitting, seized him with his left hand by the collar, and with the right gave him such a furious blow in the face, as to level him with the ground, the blood gushing out of his eyes, nose and mouth, as if he had been struck with a club. The Cacique threw himself upon his victim to finish his work, at the same time giving the signal war-whoop so loudly, that it might have been heard for a quarter of a league.

All this was the work of an instant, and before the officers present had time to recover from their astonishment, the Governor lay senseless beneath the tiger grasp of Vitachuco. One more blow from the savage would have been fatal; but ere he could deliver it, a dozen swords and lances were thrust through his body, and he fell dead, blaspheming heaven and earth at having failed in his deadly purpose.

The war-whoop of the Cacique had been heard and obeyed by his subjects throughout the village. On hearing the signal, the Indians, who were attending upon their masters, assailed them with whatever weapon or missile they could command. Some seized upon pikes and swords, which they wielded with great skill; others snatched up the pots in which meat was stewing at the fire, and beating the Spaniards about their heads, bruised and scalded them at the same time; some caught up plates, pitchers, jars, and the pestles with which they pounded the maize; others, bones remaining from the repast; others, seized upon stools, benches, and tables, striking with impotent fury when their weapons had not the power to harm. The greater number, however, armed themselves with burning firebrands,

which seemed to have been provided for the purpose, and rushed like devils into the affray.

In this chance medley fight, many of the Spaniards were terribly burnt, bruised, and scalded; some had their arms broken, others were maimed by sticks and stones. One was knocked down by his slave with a firebrand and beset by three other Indians, who dashed out his brains.

Another was assailed with blows, his teeth knocked out, and he was on the point of falling a sacrifice, when several of his countrymen came to his assistance. The savage assailant fled and mounted a hand ladder into a granary opening upon a court yard, taking with him a lance which he found against the wall. The Spaniards attempted to ascend after him, but he planted himself in the door-way, and defended the entrance so bravely with his lance, that no one dared approach him.* At length, Diego de Soto, a relative of the Governor, arrived in the court armed with a cross-bow. He presented it and took aim. The Indian never attempted to draw back or screen himself; his

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

object was, not to save his life, but to sell it as dearly as possible. At the instant De Soto drew his bow, he threw the lance. The steeled point grazed the Spaniard's right shoulder, and the shaft knocked him down upon his knees, passing half a length beyond, and remained quivering in the ground. The aim of De Soto was more certain. His shaft pierced the Indian through the breast, and killed him upon the spot.

It was fortunate for the Spaniards that most of the Indians were in chains, and none of them regularly armed, otherwise their assault would have been attended with great carnage. As it was, many Spaniards were maimed, and four slain before the savages could be overpowered.

A signal vengeance was then taken upon the prisoners. Some of the Spaniards were so exasperated at the wounds they had received, and at hearing of their Governor's maltreatment, that they wrecked their fury upon every Indian in their power. Others, who were cavaliers, thought it beneath their dignity to take away the lives of slaves. They brought their prisoners, therefore, to the grand square of the village, and delivered them into the

hands of the archers of the General's guard, who dispatched them with their halberts.

Among the cavaliers who thus brought their captive slaves to be executed, was one of a small and delicate form, named Francisco de Saldaña. He entered the square, leading after him a powerful Indian, by a cord tied round the latter's neck. No sooner, however, did the savage perceive what was passing, and the fate that awaited him, than, driven to desperation, he closed upon Saldaña as he walked before him, seized him with one hand by the neck and with the other by the thigh, raised him like a child, turned him topsy turvy with his head downwards, and dashed him to the ground with a violence that stunned him. Jumping then upon his body he would have despatched him in an instant, had not a number of Spaniards rushed with drawn swords to the rescue of their comrade. The Indian seized Saldaña's sword, and received them so bravely, that though there were more than fifty, he kept them all at bay. Grasping the weapon with both hands, he threw himself into the midst of them, whirling himself round like a wheel, and dealing blows so rapidly and madly that no one dared

oppose him, and they were obliged to dispatch him with their firearms.*

These, and many similar scenes of desperate valour occurred in this wild affray. In order to embroil with the natives of the neighbourhood, the interpreters, and those Indian allies who had accompanied the Spanish army from the other provinces, so that they should not dare thenceforward abandon the Spaniards, they were compelled to aid in destroying the prisoners, many of whom were tied to stakes in the public square, and shot with their arrows.†

In these battles and the subsequent massacres, fell Vitachuco and thirteen hundred of his warriors, the flower of his nation, among whom were the four brave leaders who had been rescued from the lake.

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

† Idem. The Portuguese narrator calls the village where this affray took place Napataca.

CHAPTER XVI.

The army pass through the province of Osachile—Arrive at a vast morass—Severe skirmishing with the Savages—Preparations to cross the great morass.

1539. THE blow which the Governor, Hernando de Soto, had received from Vitachuco, had been so violent that it was half an hour before he recovered his senses. His face was bruised and disfigured, and several of his teeth were broken, so that for three weeks he could eat no solid food. He and his wounded soldiers were obliged to remain four days in the village, before they were sufficiently recovered to undertake a journey. On the fifth day, he resumed his march, departing in search of another province, called Osachile.*

* This name is spelled Uzachil, by the Portuguese historian.

The first day they journeyed four leagues, and encamped on the bank of a deep river, which divides the two provinces, and over which it was necessary to throw a bridge. They had scarcely begun their operations, when they beheld the Indians on the opposite side, in hostile array. Abandoning their work, they hastily formed six rafts, on which a hundred men passed over, fifty cross-bow men and arquebusiers, and fifty horsemen, the latter taking with them their horses and saddles.

As soon as they reached the land, their horses were driven into the water, and made to swim across. Their owners received them on the opposite shore, saddled and mounted them immediately, and galloped into the plain. The Indians flying, the Spaniards worked without molestation at the bridge, which was finished in a day and half.

The army passed the river, and after travelling two leagues through a country free from woods, came to large fields of maize, beans, and pumkins, among which were a few scattered habitations. While they were dispersed about the fields, a number of savages lurking in ambush among the grain, assailed them with their arrows and wounded many. The

Spaniards proceeded in pursuit of them, lance in hand. There was some sharp skirmishing; many natives were wounded, and a few taken prisoners. The latter had chains put about their necks, were distributed among the soldiers, and made to carry the baggage, pound the maize, and perform other servile employments.*

The Spaniards arrived at Osachile, a village about ten leagues from that of Vitachuco. It contained two hundred houses which were deserted, the Cacique and his people having sought refuge in the woods, terrified by rumours of Vitachuco's death†. The Governor sent offers of peace and friendship to their chief by the Indian prisoners. He made no reply, neither did any of the envoys return.

The village of Osachile‡ resembled most of the Indian villages of Florida. The natives always endeavoured to build upon high ground, or at least to erect the houses of their Cacique upon an eminence. As the country was very level, they constructed artificial

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 12.

† Idem.

‡ The river Oscilla may take its name from this old Indian village and province.

mounds of earth, the summits of each being capable of containing from ten to twenty houses. Here resided the Cacique, his family, and attendants. At the foot of this hill was a square, according to the size of the village, around which were the houses of the most distinguished inhabitants. The rest of the people erected their wigwams, as near the dwelling of their chief as possible.

An ascent in a straight line from fifteen to twenty feet wide, led to the top of the hillock, and was flanked on each side by trunks of trees, joined and thrust deep into the earth; other trunks of trees formed an ascent by steps. Every other side of the mound was steep and inaccessible.

While they resided in the village of Osachile, the Spaniards learnt that they were not far from the province of Apalachee, the country of the Apalachians. They had heard a wonderful account of the extent and fertility of this district, and the bravery as well as ferocity of its inhabitants. Throughout their march, the natives had predicted that the warriors of Apalachee, would transfix them with their lances, hew them in pieces, or consume them with fire. De Soto was little moved by their menaces,

his great desire being to see this province; and if it were as fertile and abundant as represented, to winter there. After remaining, therefore, but two days in^o Osachile, he resumed his march.

The Spaniards were three days traversing an uninhabited desert, twelve leagues in extent, which lay between the two provinces, and about noon on the fourth day, arrived at the great morass.* It was bordered by forests of huge and lofty trees, with a thick underwood of thorns and brambles, and clambering vines so interwoven and matted together as to form

* This is supposed by some to have been the great swamp of Okefenokee, lying in lat. 31° North, on the frontiers of Georgia and Florida. Mr. M'Culloch, in his researches, imagines it to be the Ohahichee swamp, and his opinion is entitled to great credit, as he has investigated the subject more thoroughly than most writers. It must, however, remain a matter of conjecture; for, it is almost impossible to trace the route of De Soto and his followers, at the commencement and close of their expedition, as the distances given by both the Portuguese and Spanish chroniclers, are often exaggerated and sometimes contradictory. Vide Kear's *Voyages and Travels*, v. 5, p. 456. M'Culloch's *Researches*, p. 524. Darby's *Florida*, p. 19, 20.

a perfect barrier. Through this, the Indians had made a narrow path, scarcely wide enough for two persons to walk abreast. In the centre of the morass was a sheet of water half a league wide, and extending as far as the eye could reach.

De Soto encamped at an early hour on a fine plain on the skirts of the forest, and ordered out a hundred foot, consisting of cross-bowmen, archers, and pike men, with thirty horse, and twelve expert swimmers, to explore the passage of the morass, ascertain the depth of water, and search for a ford, against the following day.

The Spaniards had penetrated but a little way into the forest, when they were opposed by native warriors. The passage, however, was so narrow, and so completely walled on each side by a thorny and impervious forest, that not more than the two foremost of each vanguard could come to action. The Spaniards, therefore, ordered two of the stoutest to the front, armed with sword and buckler, followed by two cross-bowmen and two archers. In this way they drove the savages before them until they came to the water. Here, as both parties had room for action, there was some hard

fighting, several being killed and wounded on both sides.

Finding it impossible, under such determined opposition, to examine the depth of the water, the Spaniards sent word to the Governor, who came to their aid, with the best soldiers of the army. The enemy having likewise received a reinforcement, the battle became still more fierce and bloody. Both fought to their waists in water, stumbling among thorns and brambles, twisted roots, and the trunks of fallen trees. The Spaniards were aware, however, that it would not do to return without discovering the pass; they continued, therefore, to charge the enemy with great impetuosity. Succeeding at length in driving them out of the water, they observed that the narrow pass of which they were in search continued through the stream, being so cleared of thorns, roots, and sunken trees, that the Indians could wade up to their middles, except over about forty paces of the mid-channel, where it was too deep to be forded. This they crossed by a bridge composed of two trees fastened together. Both sides of the morass were bordered by the same kind of impervious forest, and traversed by a narrow

path. The distance through the two forests, and across the morass, was about a league and half.

The Governor, having well reconnoitered the strait, returned with his men to the encampment. Here he held a council of war, in which the difficulties and dangers of the case were discussed, and the mode of meeting them determined upon.

It was arranged that two hundred picked men should proceed in advance to secure the pass, and prepare a way for the passage of their main body. One hundred of these were to be horsemen, and one hundred foot soldiers.

The former being better armed than the infantry, and protected by bucklers, always received less injury from the enemy's arrows; they were, therefore, to take the lead, on foot, as horses would only be an embarrassment in such a narrow strait. In this way they would as it were, form a shield to the hundred foot soldiers, consisting of arquebusers and archers.

They were all to be provided with bills, hatchets, and other implements for clearing an encamping place in the opposite forest, for, as the Spaniards would have to pass the narrow

ford one by one, in the face of a ferocious enemy, it would be impossible for the whole army to traverse the morass, and both borders of woodland in one day. It appeared advisable, therefore, to make a halt in the opposite forest.*

Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 2. L. 2. c. 1.

CHAPTER XVII.

The perilous passage of the great morass — The Indians make a desperate stand at a deep stream—The Spaniards gain the pass and arrive at the Indian village of Anhayca, in the province of Apalachee. .

1539. ALL the requisite preparations being made, two hundred picked men quitted the camp, each soldier carrying with him his day's allowance, consisting of a little boiled or toasted maize. Two hours before dawn, they entered the defile of the forest, which they traversed as silently as possible until they reached the water, when they soon found the ford where the stones, roots, and sunken logs had been cleared away. Keeping along this, they came to the bridge constructed of fallen trees and thrown across the deepest part of the channel. This they passed without molestation from the Indians, who had left it unguarded, not imagining that the Spaniards

would dare to penetrate the forest, or ford the deep and perilous passage of the morass by night.

When the savages, however, perceived at day break that their enemies had passed the bridge, they rushed forward with great fury, raising loud cries and howls, to dispute the passage of the morass yet to be traversed, which was about a quarter of a league in length. The Spaniards received their attack manfully;—both parties fighting up to the middle in water. The natives were soon repulsed and driven into the defile of the forest, into which they could only enter one at a time. This being extremely narrow, and walled in by an impervious wood, it was easy to blockade the passage and prevent the enemy from sallying forth. Forty men were ordered to do so, while the remaining hundred and fifty proceeded to cut down trees and clear a place for the army to encamp:

In this manner they remained all day, the Indians in the heart of the forest shouting and yelling, as if to frighten with their noise those whom they would not engage with their arms; some of the Spaniards watching, others felling trees and burning the fallen timber. When night came, each remained where

he happened then to be. Disturbed by the yells of the savages, and obliged to maintain a constant vigilance, the Spaniards passed a sleepless night.

Next morning the troops undertook the passage, but although they met with no opposition from the enemy, they found many difficulties in the ford, and being obliged to perform the transit one by one, were the whole day in crossing.

By night they were all encamped on the cleared ground, where, however, they enjoyed but little sleep, in consequence of the yells and frequent attacks of their enemies.

At day-break they pressed forward through the defile of the second forest, driving the natives slowly before them, who retreated step by step, plying their bows incessantly, so that every inch of ground was won at the edge of the sword.

At length, after fighting onward for half a league, they emerged from this thick thorny brake into more open woodland. Here the Indians, foreseeing that there would be more scope for the horses to come into action, had taken precautions accordingly.

It was in this very morass, though not in

the immediate neighbourhood where the Spaniards were now engaged, that Pamphilo de Narvaez had been defeated about ten or eleven years before. The Indians, profiting by the experience then gained, and encouraged by the recollection of that triumph, trusted they should have like success in the present instance.

To render the horses ineffective, they had blocked up the open places of the forest with great logs, and branches fastened from tree to tree; and in the close and matted parts, they had cut narrow passages by which they might dart forth, ^{make} an assault, and disappear again in an instant.

As soon, therefore, as the Spaniards entered this more open woodland, they found themselves assailed by showers of arrows from every side. Their enemies being scattered among the thickets, sallied forth, rushed among the troops, plied their bows with great rapidity, and plunged again into the forest. The horses were of no avail; the arquebusiers and archers seemed no longer a terror; for during the time that a Spaniard fired, and reloaded his musket, or placed a bolt in, and sent it from his cross-bow, an Indian would discharge six or seven

arrows;—scarcely had one arrow taken flight before another was in the bow.

In their hampered situation, the Spaniards finding it impossible to assault the enemy, their only alternative was to defend themselves, and press forward. While, too, that they were exposed to the galling missiles of their foes, they were insulted by the taunts and threats of the savages, who reminded them of their victory over Pamphilo de Narvaez, and menaced them with a like defeat.

The Spaniards toiled full two leagues, and fought their way forward through this forest. Irritated and mortified by these galling attacks, vexatious taunts, and the impossibility of retaliating, they at length emerged into an open and level country. Here, overjoyed at being freed from their forest prison, they gave the reins to their horses and free vent to their smothered rage, scoured the plain, lancing and cutting down every Indian they encountered, out of revenge for recent annoyances, and the past defeat of Narvaez. Few of the enemy were taken prisoners, but many were put to the sword; and thus did they suffer severely for the presumptuous confi-

dence inspired by their former triumph over the Spaniards*.

The Spaniards had now arrived at a fertile region covered with villages and fields of grain for which the province of Apalachee was famous throughout the country. Wearied with their toilsome march, and almost incessant fighting, they encamped for the night in the open plain, near a small village, but could obtain no repose. All night long they were disturbed by the yells of Indians, by their repeated assaults, and by the arrows discharged into the camp.

At daybreak the troops resumed their march through extensive fields of maize, beans, pompions, and other vegetables, extending on each side of the road as far as the eye could reach, and interspersed with small cabins showing a numerous but scattered population.

The inhabitants justified their ferocious and warlike reputation, by making continual attacks, sallying from their dwellings, or starting up from their corn-fields where they had lain in ambush; and though the Spaniards

* Garcilaso de la Vega P. 2. L. 2. c. 2. Herrera. Hist. Ind. Decad. vi. L. 7. c. 12.

wreaked upon them a sanguinary revenge, slaughtering them without mercy, yet nothing could check the fury of the survivors.

After fighting their way for two leagues, the Spaniards came to a deep stream bordered by a forest*, where the savages had erected palisades and barriers to impede the passing of the horse, as well as to protect themselves. As this was one of the strongest and most important passes, and in a manner their last hope, the Indians had prepared to defend it vigorously.

Having reconnoitered the pass, the Spaniards made arrangements accordingly. The best armed horsemen alighted, and buckling on their shields, advanced with their swords and hatchets, gained the pass and broke down the barriers. The Indians fought desperately; several Spaniards were killed and many wounded, but they succeeded in forcing their way with less difficulty than they had apprehended.

Having forded the stream, they marched two leagues further without opposition, through the the same fertile and cultivated country; then

* Mr. M'Culloch supposes this to be the river Uche.

choosing a place clear from forests, encamped for the night. After four days and three nights of watching, toiling, and fighting, they hoped, that in this open place, where' the horses had free career, they should be able to enjoy repose without molestation. The darkness, however, encouraging the assaults of their restless and daring foes, obliged the Spaniards to keep constant watch with their weapons in their hands.

Even the captured Indians evinced that implacable and unconquerable spirit for which the Apalachian tribe was famous. Though in the power of their enemies, they maintained an air of haughtiness and defiance, boasting of their origin, vaunting the valour of their nation, and telling the Spaniards that they would soon arrive at the village of their Cacique, where he and a host of warriors were waiting to destroy them. The name of this Cacique was Capafi, the first they had heard of whose name was different from that of his principal village. Learning that this Indian capital was actually but two leagues distant, on the following morning, Hernando de Soto marched in advance, with two hundred horse and a hundred

foot. On their way they put all the Indians they met with to the sword.

On reaching the village they found it deserted by the 'Cacique and his men. Pursuing the fugitives they killed some, and captured others, but the Cacique made his escape. They then fixed their quarters in a village, named Anhayca,* containing two hundred and fifty large houses. The Adelantado took possession of the Caciques' dwelling, which stood at one end, and was superior to the rest.

In addition to this native capital, the Spaniards understood that there were many hamlets in the province, containing from fifty to a hundred houses more or less, besides a multitude of habitations scattered about the country. The province throughout was reputed to be pleasant, and the soil fertile, producing maize, cucumbers, beans, and wild plums; the rivers abounding in fish, which the natives caught in vast quantities throughout the year, and dried for use.†

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 12.

† Garcilaso de la Vega. P. 2. L. 2. c. 4. Portuguese Narrative, c. 12.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Juan de Añasco sets out in search of the Ocean—The adventures he met with by the way—He arrives at the bay, where he finds traces of Pamphilo de Narvaez.

1539. THE army remained quiet in the village of Anhayca for several days, recruiting from its past toils, although the enemy did not fail to continue their attacks both by night and day. The Governor now sent detachments of horse and foot to explore the surrounding country for fifteen or twenty leagues. Arias Tinoco, and Andreas de Vasconceles, two captains, were sent in different directions to the northward. They returned, the one in eight, and the other in nine days, having met with no adventures worthy of record. Both reported that they had visited many populous villages, and that the

country was fertile and free from morasses and extensive forests. Juan de Añasco, the Contador of the army, had been sent about the same time to the southward. De Soto often chose him for undertakings that required a stout heart and active spirit, though he was sometimes prone to be a little hasty in temper and positive in command. He had under him forty horse and fifty foot, and was accompanied by Gonzalo Silvestre and Gomez Arias. The latter was a relation of the Governor's wife, and a hardy soldier, seasoned in all kinds of perils and vicissitudes by land and water, as most Spanish adventurers were in those days. He had seen rough times in Moorish warfare: he had been a slave in Barbary, and to adventurous valour, added sage experience in council.

Thus accompanied, Juan de Añasco set off towards the south in hopes of coming upon the ocean, which was said to be less than thirty leagues distant from Anhayca. He was guided in his expedition by an Indian, who professed great fidelity and attachment to the Spaniards.

For two days they travelled over an excellent road, wide and level, passing two small rivers that were easily forded, and arriving

at the village of Aute, which was abandoned by the inhabitants, but well stocked with provisions. Taking with them a supply for four days, they continued on the same road. At length the Indian diverged from it, and led the way into tangled forests without any path. The ground was in many places rough and broken, and covered with fallen trees. In other places there were deep bogs overgrown with grass; these presented the appearance of firm land, but the horse and foot sank into them and were almost smothered.

In this wilderness the detachment wandered about for five days, frequently crossing their former track, until their stock of provisions was nearly exhausted. Three times they came as they thought, within sound of the distant surges of the sea, and each time the Indian took an opposite direction. In their vexation and perplexity they began to suspect his fidelity, and that he had a design they should perish with hunger in this inextricable forest, even though he should share the same fate. These suspicions, however, they kept to themselves, for they had no other guide.

They now determined to return to Aute, obtain a fresh supply of provisions, and renew

their search. Their return was the more toilsome, as they had to retrace their footsteps in order that they might not miss the road, and the mire of the bogs was so much trampled, that they sank deeper in it than before. In this painful manner, they travelled four days and their suspicions of their Indian guide revived. They grew peevish in their conduct towards him; quarrels ensued between him and the soldiers; he was beaten, and would have been killed on the spot had not Añasco interfered. Exasperated to revenge, he watched an opportunity at night while the soldiers slept, and snatching a brand from the fire, struck those who had maltreated him. This only brought on him severer punishment. A chain was put round his neck, and the other end given to a soldier to keep strict watch over him.

Next morning, in the course of their march, the guide sprang suddenly upon the soldier who had him in charge, threw him to the ground, and began to trample upon him.

Upon this the Spaniards assaulted the Indian with sword and pike: even Juan de Añasco, losing all temper, raised himself in his stirrups, and with both hands, gave him a terrible thrust with his lance; after which, as he lay insensible,

a hound was turned loose which tore him to pieces.

The guide being slain, and their anger thus cruelly appeased, the detachment began to think which way they should direct their steps. In this dilemma they turned to an Indian whom they had captured on their return to Aute. From him they gathered by signs, and a few words which they understood, that it would be impossible to reach the sea by their present route, on account of the swamps and forests; but that if they returned to Aute, he would conduct them by a direct road to the coast, and to the very place where Pamphilo de Narvaez had built his vessels and embarked.

They had no alternative but to trust to this new guide, hoping that the fate of his predecessor would have a salutary effect upon him. They returned, therefore, to the village of Aute, after fifteen days of toilsome and fruitless wandering.

As Gomez Arias and Gonzalo Silvestre were riding in advance, they captured two native prisoners near the village. On questioning them about the sea-coast, and the proper route towards it, they confirmed all that had been said by the present guide. The Spaniard^s

comforted themselves with the hope, therefore, that they would now be able to accomplish the object of their journey ; and with this persuasion, slept soundly and contentedly that night, after their toils.

1539. On the following day Juan de Añasco and his followers set out once more from the village of Aute, under the guidance of the three Indians, by the new route which the latter pointed out. The road was wide and open, free from impediments, except one narrow marsh, in which the horses did not sink over their fetlocks. They had not journeyed more than two leagues when they arrived at a spacious bay,* and proceeding along its shores, to their great joy came at last to the very place where the unfortunate Pamphilo de Narvaez and his people had sojourned. Here they found the remains of a rude forge, where the iron-work for the vessels had been wrought ; and around it lay scattered charcoal and cinders. There were large trunks of trees, also, hollowed out into troughs, in which the horses had been fed ;

* Evidently the Bay of St. Marks, or Apalachee. See Charlevoix *Journal Historique*, Let. 34.

and not far off lay the bones of the horses that had been killed.

The Spaniards gazed with melancholy interest upon these relics of a disatrous expedition, and eagerly sought to obtain from their guides further particulars respecting Narvaez and his men. The Indians had picked up some Spanish phrases during the time that Narvaez had remained in their neighbourhood; with these, aided by signs, and by words of their own language partly understood by their hearers, they contrived to give some account of the transactions at the bay. They led the Spaniards, step by step, over the scenes visited by Narvaez; showed the place where ten of his men had been surprised and slain; and pointed out every spot where anything of note had happened to that ill-fated commander.

Añasco and his companions searched in every direction to find if any letter had been left in the hollow of a tree, or if there were any inscription on the bark; as it was a common practice with discoverers to leave some memorial wherever they touched for any length of time;—they could, however, find nothing of the kind. They then proceeded along the shores of the bay to the sea, which was three leagues dis-

tant. Here, finding some old canoes cast upon the beach, ten or twelve expert swimmers embarked in them and sounded the bay, in which they found sufficient depth for large ships.

After this, they placed signals in the highest trees, so as to be apparent to any one sailing along the coast; and took down, in writing, a minute account of the place and its bearings, for the information of those who might hereafter seek it. Having taken these precautions, they made the best of their way back to the army. De Soto was rejoiced to see them, for their long absence had caused him great uneasiness. He was highly satisfied, also, to learn that they had discovered so excellent a harbour, and the very same from which Pamphilo de Narvaez had set sail with his ill-fated barks.

CHAPTER XIX.

The expedition of Juan de Añasco and his band of thirty troopers.

1539. As the season was far advanced, De Soto resolved to proceed no farther for the present, but to winter in the province of Apalachee. He caused the village of Anhayca, therefore, to be strongly fortified, additional buildings to be erected for barracks, and the surrounding country to be foraged for provisions. In the mean time, friendly messages and presents were repeatedly sent to the Cacique Capafi, who, however, rejected all overtures, and buried himself in a forest, surrounded by morasses and perilous defiles.

As De Soto saw no use in keeping up a garrison at Hirrihigua, in the bay of Espiritu Santo, he determined to send orders to Pedro

Calderon to break up his encampment there, despatch the vessels that lay in the harbour, and march with the forces under his command to rejoin the army in their winter quarters. How to get these orders to Pedro Calderon was now the question ; for, whoever, bore the message would have to retrace the wilderness through which the army had marched, to recross the deep and rapid rivers, tread gloomy forests and miry swamps, and probably encounter tribes of warlike and cruel savages, smarting from their late conflicts, and thirsting for revenge.

After mature consideration, he resolved to intrust the perilous enterprise to a band of troopers, sufficient in number to make head against a large force of savages, yet not too numerous to move with secrecy and expedition.

No sooner had he declared his determination, than there was a competition among the hardy young cavaliers of the army to be sent upon this hazardous service ; for its very danger excited their ardour. De Soto chose from among them thirty lancers, and appointed Juan De Añasco as their leader. He was accompanied by Gomez Arias, who had been his

comrade in his late expedition to the bay of Aute.

Among the lancers was one Pedro Moron, a mestizo, or half-blood, between Spaniard and mulatto, and a native of the island of Cuba. This soldier, besides being an admirable swimmer, was gifted with the faculty of smelling almost equal to that of a dog. In the island of Cuba, he had often traced a fugitive Indian into the thickets and caves where the savage had hid himself. He could also scent fire at the distance of a league, though no light or smoke was perceptible.* In company with him went another mestizo, his friend and countryman, likewise a native of Cuba.

It was on the 20th of November,† (1539,) that this small and intrepid band set out on their hazardous enterprize. As celerity of movement was important, each horseman was lightly equipped, with a casque, a coat of mail under his doublet, and a lance. A pair of alforjas or wallets were slung across the saddle bow, in which, besides a small supply of food for himself, and corn for his steed, the rider had two or three spare horse shoes, and a few nails.

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 2, L. 2, c. 7.

† Portuguese Relation.

Long before day, the gallant troopers were on the road.* Pressing forward, they scoured along at full speed, when practicable, fearing lest the rumour of their coming should precede them, and give the Indians time to assemble and dispute the passes. Overtaking two natives, they put them to death, to prevent their giving alarm to their comrades scattered about the fields. They rapidly traversed the extensive morass and vast forests of Apalachee, without opposition, and halted in an open plain on its skirts; ten of their number keeping watch while the remainder slept.

Before it was light they were again in their saddles, and urging their horses, made the best of their way over that desert tract lying between the morass of Apalachee and the village of Osachile. Apprehensive that the natives might have heard of their approach, and would make stout resistance in the village, Añasco ordered a halt. As night closed in, they pushed onward with great caution, and came in sight of the village about midnight.

* The account of this romantic and perilous expedition of the thirty troopers, is entirely from the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega. The Portuguese Narrative makes very brief mention of it.

Not stopping to reconnoitre, they loosened their reins, clapped spurs to their horses, and dashed through the village at full speed. Galloping on about a league further, they deviated from their course for a short distance, and halted for the remainder of the night; having travelled this day more than thirteen leagues.

At daybreak they resumed their journey, putting their horses to their speed, lest the natives, scattered about the fields, should give alarm. Thus they proceeded for five leagues to the river Osachile, at the risk of killing their horses; but these were, luckily, so high mettled that they suffered little.

On approaching the river, Gonzalo Silvestre, who had pushed his horse more than his companions, was in advance. He was fearful lest the river should have swollen since the army had crossed it. Fortunately, however, the water had fallen; at which he was so overjoyed that he plunged in with his horse, swam the stream, and mounted the bank on the other side. When his companions came up they were rejoiced to see him on the opposite bank, for they had entertained the same fear, that the

river might have increased. They all dashed in, gained the further side without accident, and with light hearts, dismounted and breakfasted on the green sward:

They were soon again on horseback, and approached the village of Vitachuco at a moderate pace. Thinking to have found the place as they had quitted it, they looked forward to some severe fighting with the inhabitants, and expected to pass through it at the point of the sword. A consultation was held, and it was resolved, that none should stop to fight, but that they should cut their way through the enemy at full gallop ; as the death of one of their number, or of a horse, would be a serious loss, and increase the perils of the expedition. Thus determined, they spurred on, and were soon relieved from their apprehensions. They found the village a scene of utter desolation ; the houses burnt, the walls thrown down, and the bodies of those Indians who had fallen on the day of battle, heaped up into a mound, and left uninhumed. The Spaniards afterwards learnt, that the natives had destroyed this village, from an idea that it had been built on an evil and ill-fated site ; and, that they had

left the corpses of their people unburied, food for carrion birds and wild beasts, because, according to their superstitious belief, the unfortunate, and defeated in battle, were infamous and accursed.

CHAPTER XX.

Continuation of the bold and perilous expedition of Juan de Añasco, and his thirty lancers—De Soto's enterprise against the Cacique of Capafi.

1539. THE Spaniards checked their horses, and wound slowly through the ruins of the village, wondering at the desolation around them. They had left it but a short distance behind them, when they encountered two Indian warriors, on a hunting expedition. The moment the Indians perceived the horse advancing, they took refuge under a large walnut-tree close at hand. One of them, however, afraid to trust to the shelter of the tree, fled, and made an attempt to reach the woods on the opposite side of the road, but two horsemen pursued him, and before he gained the wood, transfixing him with their lances.

The other Indian, being of a more courageous spirit, undauntedly kept his station under the tree ; and as fortune usually favours the daring, he met with a better fate. Fixing an arrow in his bow, he fearlessly faced the Spaniards, who came galloping one after the other, and threatened to shoot, if they approached him. Some of the cavaliers, irritated at his insolence, or moved by jealousy of his courage, would fain have dismounted and attacked him lance in hand.

Añasco, however, interfered, representing to them that there was neither valour nor prudence in attacking a desperate man, especially at a time when the death, even of a horse, would be deeply felt, and when too they were so badly provided with medicines for healing the wounded. He then ordered them to diverge from the road, lest the Indian should shoot any of the horses as they passed : for this was greatly dreaded. The savage allowed the Spaniards all to pass, and finding that, instead of attacking him, they had turned on one side, he ran after them, calling them mean-spirited cowards, and taunting them for flying from a single foe. At this moment there arose a wild outcry from every part of

the surrounding forests. The savages started up on all sides, and called upon each other to barricade the road. But the Spaniards gave their horses the réins and spur, and soon left the enemy behind them. This night they halted in a level and beautiful plain, having travelled seventeen leagues since morning, and the last eight through the province of Vitachuco.

On the fourth day they journeyed another seventeen leagues through the same province. The natives, thirsting for revenge, on account of their late defeat, were on the alert; and seeing the Spaniards passing through their country with so small a force, determined to massacre them. They, therefore, sent seven native runners to spread an alarm of the coming of the white men, in order that their warriors might assemble at some narrow pass, and dispute the way. The Christians, however, suspecting their designs, pursued the runners so closely, that they took them all prisoners. At nightfall they encamped as usual in an open plain.

Having roused themselves from their slumbers, a little past midnight, and resumed their march, by sunrise they had already travelled five

leagues, and had arrived at the river Ochali, where, on a former occasion, the Indians had killed the greyhound. They expected to find the river shallower than when they crossed it before; but, on the contrary, it had overflowed its banks, and was now a deep, turbid, rapid stream, boiling and foaming with whirlpools, fearful even to look upon, and dangerous to traverse.

The Spaniards held a consultation for a few moments. Their first object being to secure the opposite bank before the Indians should arrive, it was determined, that twelve of the best swimmers, stripping themselves of every thing except their casques and coats of mail, and disencumbering their horses of saddles and saddle-bags, and taking only their lances in their hands, should swim their steeds to the opposite bank, and take post there, to protect the crossing of their companions with the baggage. At the same time fourteen soldiers were ordered to construct a raft of drift wood, with all speed, to transport the baggage and such of the party as could not swim; and four to mount guard at their present post, until the passage should be effected.

This was immediately put into execution.

The twelve swimmers threw off all superfluous clothes, and taking their lances, urged their horses into the stream. Eleven of them landed in safety at a large opening on the opposite bank. The twelfth swimmer was Juan Lopez Cacho, page to the Governor, and the same youth who once accompanied Gonzalo Silvestre on his perilous errand to the camp. In attempting to cross, he drifted with his horse somewhat below the opening. Finding he could not stem the current up to the place where his companions had landed, he let his horse swim lower down the river and sought some other landing place. He attempted several times to scramble up the bank, but it was like a wall, and there was no footing for the horse. He was compelled, therefore, to return to the opposite shore, but before he reached it his horse began to falter through fatigue. Calling for assistance to his companions, who were felling wood for the raft, four threw themselves into the water and dragged him and his horse on shore. By the time they reached it, the poor youth was so thoroughly chilled, and exhausted by struggling so long in the cold water, that he was more like a corpse than a living being.

Leaving the cavaliers to complete the crossing of the river, we will cast a look back at the camp, to notice the proceedings of its commander.

Having despatched Juan de Añasco and his thirty lancers on their expedition, the next thought of De Soto was for the security and comfort of his army. Ever since he had been quartered in the village of Anhayca, the Indians had not ceased to harass him either by attacks or alarms, day and night. The whole neighbourhood was beset by them, lurking about in ambush, and watching every movement of the Spaniards, so that a soldier could not stray a bow-shot from the camp without being waylaid and assaulted.

Knowing the devotion of the natives to their chieftains, it occurred to De Soto, that if he could once get Capafi, the Cacique of Apalachee, into his power, his subjects would cease from their vexatious assaults. It was a long time, however, before he could discover where that chieftain had concealed himself, for he did not take the field with his warriors like the other Caciques. In fact, the chief, though formidable from his sovereign power, was so enormously fat that he could not walk. When he went about in his

dwelling, he usually did so upon his hands and knees, and when he moved from place to place, he was borne in a litter on the shoulders of his subjects.

At length De Soto received intelligence that the Cacique, being too fat to travel, had posted himself in the midst of an extensive forest, about eight leagues from the camp; the road to which lay through tangled thickets, and treacherous morasses, which rendered the place almost inaccessible. It was, moreover, strongly fortified and garrisoned by a band of the choicest Apalachian warriors, so as to be deemed by them altogether impregnable.

As an enterprise against this stronghold was one of peculiar peril, De Soto, with his accustomed intrepidity, took it upon himself, and, at the head of a body of horse and foot, in three days made his way, with great difficulty, to the Indian citadel, the construction of which deserves particular mention.

In the heart of this forest, the Indians had cleared a piece of ground, and fortified it strongly, for the residence of the Cacique and his warriors. The only entrance or outlet was by a narrow path, cut through the wood. At every hundred paces, this path was barricaded

by palisades and trunks of trees, at each of which was posted a guard of the bravest warriors. Thus the fat Cacique was ensconced in the midst of the forest, like a spider in his web, and his devoted subjects were ready to defend him to the last gasp.

When the Governor arrived at the entrance of this perilous defile, he found the enemy well prepared for its defence. The Spaniards pressed forward, but the path was so narrow, that the two foremost only could engage. They gained the first and second palisade at the point of the sword. Here it was necessary to cut the osiers and other bands with which the Indians had fastened the beams. While thus occupied, they were exposed to a galling discharge of arrows, and received many wounds. Notwithstanding all these obstacles, they gained one palisade after the other, until, by hard fighting, they arrived at the Cacique's place of refuge.

Here was the hottest of the battle. The Indians, driven to desperation by the imminent peril of their Chief, threw themselves upon the swords and spears of the Spaniards. The latter were animated by the sight of their prey, and excited to furious zeal by the example and voice of De Soto, who not only fought as usual, in

the thickest of the fray, but called on his men by name, and cheered them on to action.

The obstinate conflict lasted a long time, many feats of prowess being performed on both sides, but the Indians, for want of defensive armour, fought upon unequal terms, and were most of them cut down. The Cacique called out to the survivors to surrender. The latter, having done all that good soldiers could do, and seeing every warlike effort vain, threw themselves on their knees before the Governor, and offered their own lives, but entreated him to spare the life of their Prince.

De Soto, moved by their valour and loyalty, received them with kindness, assuring them of pardon for the past, and that thenceforth he would consider them as friends. Capafi, not being able to walk, was borne in the arms of his attendants to kiss the hands of the Governor, who, well pleased to have him in his power, treated him with the utmost kindness.*

* The Inca. P. 2. L. 2. c. 10.

CHAPTER XXI.

Singular escape of the Cacique Capafi—Continuation of the expedition of Juan de Añasco and his thirty lancers, and what further befell them,

1539. DE Soto returned well pleased to the village of Anhayca, flattering himself that he should meet with no further molestation from the savages, as he held their Cacique captive. His hopes, however, were vain, for the Indians, freed from the charge of protecting their chieftain, employed themselves in molesting the christians. The General considering this a base instance of ingratitude, for his forbearance in having refrained from ravaging the country, threatened Capafi with a war of extermination.

The Cacique expressed much grief at the

conduct of his subjects, and informed De Soto that the most eminent of them were concealed in a thick forest, five or six leagues from the camp. He offered to go thither, guarded by a body of Spaniards, and persuade them to submit, adding, that no messages would avail, as they were not to be convinced that he was not a prisoner in irons and harshly treated. De Soto, accordingly, ordered a company of horse and foot to escort him, charging them to watch him closely, and not allow him to escape. They quitted the village before morning, and, directing their march in a southerly direction, reached the forest about sunset.

Here the Cacique sent some of his train to the warriors, concealed in the forest, with orders that they should assemble before him on the following morning. Trusting that this order of Capafi would be punctually obeyed, the Spaniards betook themselves to rest for the night, having first placed sentinels at the out-posts, and a strong guard round the Cacique; whose unwieldy bulk, in fact, seemed a sufficient guarantee for his safety. Partly through negligence, however, and partly through weariness from three day's journey, the guard fell asleep. Upon this, the wily Chieftain,

watching his opportunity, crawled on all fours through the camp, and soon fell in with a party of his subjects, who raised him on their shoulders, and bore him off to the forest.

When the Spaniards awoke, the Cacique was not to be found. They beat up the neighbouring thickets, but without success. Each wondered, and questioned the other, how so unwieldy a man could have escaped without being seen or heard. The sentinels all swore that they had been exceedingly vigilant; it was unanimously agreed, therefore, that the Indians must have conjured up some demon to carry him off through the air. They returned to the army, deeply mortified; followed by the Indians at a distance, taunting and jeering them, but offering no other molestation. Upon reaching the camp much crest-fallen, they invented a thousand fables to account to the Governor and his officers for the prisoner's escape. All agreed they had witnessed strange sights during the night, and insisted that the Cacique could not have eluded their vigilance, unless he had been spirited away by devils or by magical arts.

The Governor, though aware that the soldiers had neglected their duty, knew there was no

remedy, and in order not to displease them, pretended to be convinced of the truth of what they 'had' represented. He increased their satisfaction by saying the savages were such notorious necromancers that they might have performed even more wonderful things.

We must now return to the thirty cavaliers whom we left preparing to cross the river Ocali. Those employed in felling the timber, soon finished the raft; being provided for such emergencies with hatchets and cords. When the raft was completed, they fastened two large ropes to it under the water, by which it could be drawn backwards and forwards, from bank to bank.

Two good swimmers carried one of the ropes to the opposite shore. They had but just accomplished this, when the natives of Ocali rushed down to the river to assail them. The eleven cavaliers who had already crossed, closed with the enemy, killed some, put the rest to flight, and remained masters of the field; nevertheless, great numbers of arrows were discharged at them from a distance.

The combat ended, they called for their cloaks to be sent over on the first raft, as a north wind had risen, and being dripping wet,

without having any other covering but their shirts and coats of mail, they were suffering severely from the cold.

The raft was pulled backward and forward many times before all the baggage, and such of the Spaniards as could not swim, were ferried across. As fast as they landed, the majority hastened to join their comrades, who were keeping the savages at bay, while the remainder unloaded the raft.

The four horsemen who had been posted as a rear-guard, to protect the men as they embarked, had succeeded in covering them from assault. Two of them Hernando Athanasio and Gonzalo Silvestre, remained for the last crossing, which was likely to be the most perilous. When the raft was laden and ready for the passage, Athanasio sprang upon it, leading his horse into the water to swim alongside. Silvestre then charged the savages, drove them from the shore, returned at full speed, leaped from his horse, urged him into the water, cast loose the fastening of the raft, and springing upon it, gave a signal for it to be hauled over to the opposite bank.

All this was accomplished with such prompt-

ness, that they were already half way across the river, and out of danger, before their enemies could reach the shore.

The horses performed their parts admirably. They required neither spur nor scourge, and scarcely any leading; they never hesitated, but seemed to comprehend their real danger—to be conscious that an enemy was hovering near, and that their safety depended upon their docility and perfect obedience to their masters.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon when the whole detachment had crossed the river, neither man nor horse having received a wound. They marched towards the village, where they purposed resting, as Juan Lopez Cacho had been so long in the water, as to be completely chilled, and unable to move hand or foot.

The savages opposed their approach to the village, until the wives and children of the former had time to fly to the woods. When they considered their families to be in safety, they abandoned the place. The Spaniards entered and halted in the middle of the public square, fearing to quarter in the houses, lest, being separated, the enemy might surround and make them prisoners.

They kindled four large fires in the square, near which they laid poor Juan Lopez and covered him with their cloaks. One of his friends gave him a dry shirt, which he chanced to have with him—at this time a most acceptable gift.

They remained in the village the rest of the day, in a state of great anxiety. The situation of Juan Lopez rendered it impossible for him to travel this night, yet his companions feared lest the delay might give the natives time to spread alarm or gather in numbers, and barricade the road. Resolving, however, not to abandon their companion, they tethered one half the horses, and fed them with maize, while the remainder went the rounds. Some of the troops occupied themselves in drying their saddles and clothes, and others in replenishing the saddlebags with maize; for although there was abundance of dried grapes, plums, and various other fruits, they took nothing but Indian corn, which answered as food both for themselves and horses.

As night closed in, mounted sentinels patrolled the village and its vicinity, to give warning in case an enemy should approach. About the mid-watch, while going the round

two horsemen, heard a low murmuring noise, as of men advancing. One of them immediately galloped off to put his comrades on their guard, while the other remained to reconnoitre and ascertain the meaning of the sound. In the brightness of the starlight, he descried a large body of savages moving towards the village, and hastened to give the alarm. The Spaniards, finding that Juan Lopez was somewhat recovered,* threw the cloaks of his companions over him and seating him on a horse, fastened him in the saddle, a soldier leading his horse by the reins. In this manner they quitted the village in deep silence, before the enemy arrived, and travelled so expeditiously, that at day break they were six leagues from Ocali.

They continued their journey with the same expedition, in order that the rumour of their approach might not precede them, killing all the natives they encountered near the road, lest they should give an alarm. In the uninhabited tracts they slackened their pace, that the horses might rest and be ready to run when necessary. Thus passed this day, which was the sixth of their wayfaring, having travelled almost twenty leagues, and part of the dis-

tance through the province of Acuera, a country peopled with warlike savages.

On the seventh day, Pedro de Atienza declared himself to be ill. They made light of his declaration, and not to lose time urged him forward. He continued from time to time to complain, but without being attended to, until having ridden in this way for several hours, he fell dead beside his horse. His comrades were shocked at his sudden death, and at their own want of sympathy in his sufferings. There was no time to be lost, however, in ceremonials. They dug a grave with their hatchets upon the spot, buried him by the way side, and then rode on, deploring the loss of a brave soldier and well tried comrade.

That night after travelling twenty leagues, they encamped on the border of the great morass. It was so extremely cold, in consequence of a keen north wind, that they were compelled to kindle fires at the risk of warning the Indians of their vicinity. Twenty resolute men would have been sufficient to dispute this pass, and massacre every one of them, as the savages would possess great advantage in their canoes over the Spaniards who could not avail themselves of their horses, and had

neither archers nor cross-bows to dislodge the enemy. Thus troubled and anxious, one third of their number kept watch at a time, while the others slept, in order to recruit their strength for the fatigues of the coming day.

CHAPTER XXII.

Passage of the great morass—The troopers suffer from extreme cold—The vexation of Gomez Arias—They capture some of the natives—Perplexed with fears for the safety of the garrison at Hirrihigua—Their arrival there.

1539. THE Spaniards had slept but a few hours when they were awakened by the sufferings of Juan de Soto, who had been the companion of Pedro Atienza, and who died almost as suddenly, being overcome by excessive fatigue.

Some of the troops fled from the neighbourhood of the corpse, declaring that the plague had broken out among them and caused these sudden deaths. Gomez Arias, vexed at their panic cried out, "If you fly from us, whither will you go? You are not on the river banks

of Seville, nor in its olive groves." Ashamed of their alarms, the fugitives returned and joined 'in prayers for the dead, but would not aid in interring the body, insisting that their companion had died of the dreaded pestilence.

When day dawned, they prepared to pass the morass. Eight Spaniards, who could not swim, proceeded to the bridge, and having replaced its railing, carried over the saddles of their horses and the clothes of their companions. The remainder, perfectly naked, vaulted upon their horses, and endeavoured to force them into the water; but it was so cold that they shrank back. The soldiers then attached ropes to their halters, and four or five swam to the middle of the current attempting to drag the horses after them, others struck them behind with long poles. The animals, however, planted their feet firmly in the ground, and could not be moved.

Two or three were at length urged into the stream, but when they came to the deep water, the cold was so great that they turned back, dragging the swimmers after them. For more than three hours the latter thus laboured in vain. At length they succeeded in forcing two

horses over, one of which belonged to the leader Juan de Añasco, the other to Gonzalo de Silvestre. Both of these cavaliers, being among the number of those who could not swim, had already passed by the bridge. As soon as their horses had landed, they saddled and mounted them, in order to be ready for action should an enemy approach.

Notwithstanding two horses had thus led the way, no other, either by coaxing or cudgelling, could be prevailed upon to follow Gomez Arias, the hardy chief of nineteen companions who, entirely naked, had been labouring up to their waists in water more than four hours, exposed to the keen north wind, and so thoroughly chilled that their naked bodies were almost black. They were wearied in body, and vexed in spirit; and seeing all their exertions useless, were almost driven to despair.

At this juncture, Juan de Añasco, having saddled and mounted his horse, as has been stated, advanced on the opposite side, as far as he could ford, until he reached the edge of the deep channel. He was enraged that no more horses had crossed; and without inquiring the reason, or regarding the comfortless

plight of Gomez Arias and his comrades, attributed it to a want of respect towards himself as their leader. Under this impression, he cried out angrily, "Gomez Arias, bad luck to you! why do you not pass those horses over?"

The spleen of honest Gomez, who was a rough soldier, being already sufficiently roused by the toils, sufferings, and vexations he had endured, this speech of his commander, cut him to the quick. Casting a grim and surly glance at Añasco, "Bad luck to *you*," he cried, "and to the drab of a cur that bore you. There you sit on your horse, comfortably clad and wrapped up in your cloak, and never think that we have been for more than four hours in the water, half frozen with cold. Dismount—and come here! and we shall see how much better you can do than we have done."

Juan de Añasco, though prone to be passionate, recollected himself and restrained his anger. The companions of Gomez Arias told him the true state of the case: he saw that he had been wrong in speaking so abruptly to the veteran, whose rough reply was excited by his vexatious situation, rather than by any personal disrespect.

Juan de Añasco, by the hastiness of his tem-

per, often drew upon himself similar rebuffs in this and other expeditions; for there is nothing which a partisan commander ought more strictly to observe, than the obligation of treating his comrades with kindness and civility.

When this discord was appeased, the Spaniards renewed their efforts, and the noontide sun having somewhat tempered the coldness of the water, the horses were slowly forced across. By three in the afternoon all had passed over.

They were, indeed, in a wretched plight, drenched with water, worn out with excessive toil, benumbed with cold, exhausted with hunger, and what added to the misery of their condition, they had but little provisions to recruit their strength and spirits. They uttered no complaint, however, so much rejoiced were they at having crossed this much dreaded pass, without having been opposed by an enemy; for, had only fifty savages hemmed them in, their destruction must have been inevitable. The forbearance of the natives in not attacking them, was most probably, owing to the distance of the morass from any hamlet or village;—it was, moreover, now the winter season, during which

period, the Indians, being naked, seldom quitted their houses.

The Spaniards determined to pass the night in an extensive plain near the morass, for they and their horses were so much fatigued that they could not travel a step. They made large fires, therefore, to warm themselves, and found consolation in the reflection, that from this place unto Hirrihigua, whither they were journeying, they should encounter no further impediments.

At night they observed the same precautions as before, and resumed their march before daybreak. In this way they travelled two days without meeting any thing worthy of record. The horses of the two companions who had died, went free, saddled and bridled, sometimes following the others, sometimes taking the lead and keeping as regularly in the route as if they had riders to guide them. The night of the tenth day was passed within three leagues of the village of Mucozo.

A little past midnight the Spaniards were again in the saddle. They had not gone far before Pedro Moron, the half-caste, so noted for the quickness of his scent, suddenly cried out: "take heed! I smell fire at no great dis-

tance." His companions looked about but could neither see nor smell fire.

After proceeding about a league further, Moron again stopped. "I am certain," said he, "that there is fire somewhere, close at hand." They now advanced warily, and after a short time discovered a fire in a forest close by. Drawing silently near, they perceived a number of Indians, with their wives and children, seated round it, cooking and eating fish. Though they supposed them to be subjects of the friendly Cacique Mucozo, they resolved to capture as many as they could, in order to ascertain whether this chieftain continued at peace with Pedro Calderon. In case he did not, they determined to make all his subjects who might fall into their hands prisoners of war and send them as slaves to Havana. They accordingly dashed forward to surround the group. On hearing the sudden tramp of horses, the savages started up and made for the woods. Many eluded pursuit in the darkness, and many escaped in the thickets. The Spaniards took prisoner about twenty persons, women and children, who continually called out the name of Ortiz, to remind their captors of the past kindness of their Ca-

cique. But this availed nothing; they were secured.

The half starved Spaniards, without dismounting, made a hearty meal of the fish, not waiting to cleanse them from the sand with which the trampling of the Indians, and of the horses had covered them.

Refreshed by their hasty repast, they continued their journey, keeping clear of the village of Mucozo. After travelling five leagues, the horse of Juan Lopez Cacho could not proceed; having never recovered from its sufferings in crossing the river Ocali. Its rider had fared better, having been restored, partly by the sudden alarm of the night, and chiefly, by the natural vigour of his age, being not more than twenty years old. Throughout the remainder of the journey he was as active as any of his companions.

Finding it impossible to get the horse on, although within six leagues of the journey's end, it was left in a meadow where there was abundance of pasturage, and its saddle and bridle hung in a tree; so that any Indian who should use the horse might also have its furniture. It was feared, however, that as soon as the Indians found it, they would kill it. After travelling

nearly five leagues, the detachment arrived within three miles of the village of Hirrihigua where they expected to find Captain Pedro Calderon, with forty horse and eighty foot. They examined the ground narrowly as they rode along, hoping to discover some tracks of horses, for as the village was so near, and the country free from wood, it seemed to them natural that their countrymen should have ridden out as far as this, and even farther. Discovering, however, no traces of the kind, they were filled with dismal forebodings, fearing that Calderon and his men had been massacred by the natives, or had quitted the country in the caravels. In either case, what were they to do? Surrounded by enemies, having no bark and without the means of building one! To return to the Governor appeared impossible, after what they had already suffered. Having discussed their forlorn condition, they unanimously agreed, that if they did not find their companions in Hirrihigua, they would retire into some of the fastnesses of the adjacent forests, where there was abundance of grass for the horses. They resolved to kill the superfluous horse, dry its flesh as food for the journey, and when the

other horses should be sufficiently recruited attempt to return to the Governor. Should they be attacked upon the road, they determined to die like true and faithful soldiers; and if they arrived safe, they would at least enjoy the satisfaction of having fulfilled their commander's orders.

With this heroic resolve they proceeded; the further they advanced, however, the more were they confirmed in their fears; for they discovered no trace of their comrades. At length they came to a small lake, less than half a league from the village. Here they found fresh tracks of horses, and near the water, marks of cloths having been recently washed there.

A joyful shout burst from the lips of every Spaniard. The horses were dragging wearily along, but the moment they scented the traces of their companions, they threw up their heads, pricked their ears, and neighed loudly, plunging and leaping about as if just taken from the stable: setting off at a quick pace, they soon accomplished the remainder of their journey.

The sun was setting as they came in sight of the village. The night patrol were defiling out on horseback, with lance and shield, and

shining armour. Juan de Añasco and his followers fell into the same order, and advanced at a furious gallop, as if tilting in the lists, rending the air with their huzzas and joyous shouts. Pedro Calderon and his men sallied out to meet them, and received them with open arms. Instead of inquiring, however, after the health and welfare of the army, the Governor, and their particular friends, they anxiously demanded whether there was any gold in the country?

Añasco, without delay, inquired of Calderon whether the natives of the province, and the vassals of Mucozo, had continued friendly; and learning, they had, he directed that the prisoners recently taken should be immediately liberated, and sent home to their country loaded with presents. By them he sent an invitation to Mucozo to pay him a visit with a train of attendants, to convey to their dwellings the sea stores and other articles which, on the Spaniards' departure, they intended leaving behind: at the same time, Añasco recommended to the Cacique's care the horse which had been left in his territory.

The Indians, departed delighted with this kind treatment, and on the third day, came the good

Mucozo, followed by his warriors and a train of attendants; two of whom led the horse, while the others carried the saddle and bridle, as they knew not how to use them. Mucozo embraced Añasco and his comrades, and after enquiring for the Governor and the army, requested him to relate the particulars of his journey, the battles and skirmishes, the toils and privations which he and his detachment had suffered. When Mucuzo had heard the whole detail, he observed that he should rejoice if he could impress his own spirit and will upon the other Caciques throughout the land, that all might treat the Governor and his people with the kindness which, as he considered, they so well merited.

Juan de Añasco was struck with the difference between the reception he met with from this noble chieftain, and that of his own countrymen, whose first inquiry had been after gold. With a grateful heart, he thanked him for the kindness he had shown to Calderon and his soldiers, and delivered to him many friendly messages from the Governor.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Añasco sails in quest of the Bay of Aute—Gomez Arias embarks for the Havana ; and Calderon prepares to march to join the army—Breaking up of the garrison at Mirrihigua—Pedro Calderon sets out to rejoin the Governor—Desperate conflict with the natives in crossing the Great Swamp.

1539. JUAN de Añasco now prepared to discharge the duties of his mission. He was to embark in two brigantines, and to coast to the westward until he should arrive at the Bay of Aute, which he had discovered with so much toil. He brought orders, also, from the Governor to Captain Pedro Calderon, to rejoin him with his troops, by land : and Gomez Arias, was to sail for Havana in the caravel, to convey an account to Doña Isabel de Bobadilla of the expedition.

The whole harbour was in a bustle. The brigantines and caravel were careened and repaired, the sea stores, sails, rigging and equipments carried on board, the crews mustered and embarked. Equal stir was made for the march by land; in preparing the furniture for horses, furbishing armour and weapons, and selecting every article necessary for the service.

After all the necessary preparations had been made, there remained an abundance of articles, which the Spaniards could not take with them; such as cassava bread, clothing, cuirasses, helmets, bucklers, lances, pikes, besides sea stores, and quantities of steel and iron, which the Governor had provided in such profusion for the expedition. All these superfluous commodities were given to Mucozo as a reward for his constant friendship. The Cacique found himself suddenly possessed of a profusion of valuable stores. During four days that he remained at the harbour, his subjects were incessantly busy going to and fro like ants, bearing off these presents to his capital. Every preparation being made and the crews embarked, besides thirty soldiers who were distributed in the brigantines and caravel, and twenty Indian

women for Doña Isabel,* the different commanders took leave of each other, and of their respective comrades. Juan de Añasco set sail in the brigantines in quest of the Bay of Aute; Gomez Arias in the caravel for Havana, and Pedro Calderon prepared to march, as soon as he should have seen them fairly under weigh.† With this cavalier and his little army we shall continue for the present, hoping to meet Juan de Añasco at some future day.

No sooner had Añasco and Arias set sail, than with a force of seventy horse and fifty foot, Calderon sallied out of Hirrihigua, leaving the gardens and fields which had been planted in full vegetation. They reached Mucozo's village on the evening of the second day. The kind Cacique came out to welcome them, and hospitably quartered them for that night. The next day he escorted them to the frontier of his dominions, where he took leave of them with many expressions of regret.

Pedro Calderon continued his march until evening, when he encamped in a plain skirted by a forest. The night darkened apace, and

* Portuguese Narrative. c. 12.

† Garcilaso de la Vega, P 2, L 2, c. 27.

suddenly a party of natives rushed into the encampment. The Spaniards attacked them sword in hand, dispersing and persuing them to the entrance of the woods. As soon, however, as the former returned to the camp, the savages were on their track, and in this manner annoyed them all night long. During these skirmishes, one of the horsemen pursued an Indian; who, finding the horse gained upon him, and that he would soon be overtaken, turned suddenly round, fixed an arrow in his bow, and discharged it at the same moment that the horseman threw his lance. The savage fell dead, but not unrevenged; for his arrow pierced the horse's breast with a mortal wound, so that Indian, christian and horse, rolled together upon the plain.

The Indian must have been one of their chief warriors; for, on his fall, the savages immediately fled into the forest and were not again seen.

The horse that was slain, was the famous steed of Gonzalo Silvestre. The Spaniards, astonished that this powerful animal should have died so suddenly, merely by the wound of an arrow, opened its body and found that the shaft had penetrated its breast, and

passed through its heart to the very entrails. So adroit were the natives of Florida in the use of the bow.

Next evening the Spaniards slept on the margin of the grand morass, and traversed it without opposition from the enemy on the following morning. They made forced marches, the horsemen dismounting by turns, and relieving the foot soldiers. Thus they travelled for several days, without a single conflict with the natives, finding refreshment and food in the villages, which were all abandoned, the whole country being as silent as if it had been uninhabited, until they arrived at the warlike province of Apalachee.

Having encamped upon the skirts of a thick forest bordering the morass, next morning they entered the defile, half a league in length, and reaching the water, the foot soldiers passed over the Indian bridge of logs, while the horse swam the deepest portion of the channel. Calderon, finding that they had traversed the most perilous portion of the morass, wished to hasten over the remainder. He, therefore, ordered ten horsemen to take behind them five arquebusiers, and five cross-bowmen, and seize upon the narrow pass through the forest which

was on the opposite bank. They set off at full speed through the water, when shrill cries and yells arose from different quarters, and Indians rushing from behind bushes, brakes and the trunks of huge trees, discharged showers of arrows at them.

At the very first discharge, the horse of Alvaro Fernandez, a Portuguese, was killed, and five others wounded. The horses, panic-struck with the sudden attack and clamour, turned and fled; their masters being unable to restrain them. Plunging and rearing in the water, which was up to their breasts, they threw off the foot soldiers, who were all wounded, as the wheeling of the horses exposed their shoulders to the enemy's arrows. The Indians perceiving this, advanced eagerly to despatch them, giving their war-whoop, and shout of victory to encourage their companions.

The suddenness of the attack, the overthrow of the ten archers the flight of the horses, the thronging of hordes of natives to the combat, produced a scene of wild confusion. The Spaniards were bewildered, and as the battle was in the water, and the cavalry could render no assistance, they were greatly alarmed for the result of the conflict.

The savages, on the contrary, encouraged by the success of their first efforts, attacked the fallen archers with greater fury. The nearest Spaniards rushed across the bridge to their rescue. A formidable band of native warriors advanced on the left; about twenty paces before them stalked an Indian, perfectly naked, fearless and bold in his bearing, with a large plume of feathers upon his head. His object evidently was to gain the shelter of a large tree, which lay between him and the Spaniards, from behind which he might annoy them, and prevent their passing. Gonzalo Silvestre, who happened to be near, perceived his intention and shouted to Anton Galvon. Galvon was one of those who had been dismounted and wounded, but like a true soldier, he had retained his cross-bow. He followed Silvestre, who shielded him with a quilted garment, which he had found floating in the water; advising him to shoot at none but the leading Indian, who was evidently the Chief. In this manner they gained the tree, but this movement did not escape the observation of the savage; he bent his bow, and in an instant discharged three arrows. They were sent with unerring aim, but Silvestre received them upon

the garment which he used as a shield, and which being wet, proved an effectual defence.

Antón Galvon who had reserved his aim until the savage should draw near, now fixed a bolt in his cross-bow, and sent it through the Indian's breast; the latter staggered a few paces, crying out to his followers, "These traitors have slain me." They rushed to his aid, received him in their arms with dismal murmurs, and passing him from one to the other, conveyed him from the field of battle.

The combat was no less bloody in other parts of the morass. A large body of Indians advanced on the right. A valiant soldier, Andrés de Meneses, who with ten or twelve others, stood to oppose them, receiving four arrows in his thighs, fell into the water; luckily his large shield covered him, and the enemy leaving him, shot at his companions, five of whom were grievously wounded.

The savages, elated by their successes, and considering the victory as already theirs, redoubled their efforts. The Spaniards were evidently losing ground, for only fifty of their number could be brought to engage, and the cavalry could neither render assistance, nor molest the enemy. They fought, however,

desperately;—it was a struggle for life. At this critical moment, information reached the Indians that their Chief was mortally wounded. It gave an immediate check to their ardour; they soon began slowly to retreat, but nevertheless kept up a constant discharge of arrows.

The Spaniards perceiving these signs of faltering among their adversaries, rallied, charged, and driving them out of the morass, pursued them to the narrow defile of the forest, taking possession of the cleared field in which De Soto had formerly encamped.

This the enemy had strongly fortified, but had abandoned it in order to assist their Chief. Here the Spaniards halted for the night, as the place was strong and only accessible through the defile. Scarcely one among them escaped without a wound. The least injured bound up and dressed the wounds of their comrades. Not an eye was closed that night. Every man maintained anxious watch, the savages who hovered around them, keeping up a dismal howling until break of day.

The lucky shot of Anton Galvon had proved

the salvation of the Spaniards in this desperate contest; for the Indian laid low by his bolt, proved to be the hostile Chief, whose fall changed the tide of battle in their favour. But for his timely destruction every one of them would probably have been massacred.

Early in the morning, they resumed their march, driving their foes before them through the defile of the forest. At length they issued into the open woods, where the enemy availed themselves of the same barriers and palisades which had stood there when De Soto passed. They sallied from behind these and discharging a shower of arrows, retreated, wounding in this way about twenty Spaniards. Every inch of ground was disputed for a distance of two leagues, when the Spaniards came to a plain, where the enemy left them through fear of the cavalry. They now marched five leagues further, and halted in an open country, that the wounded might have some repose; but as soon as night set in, the Indians again beset their camp with dreadful yells, and taunting speeches. The little army, worn out by repeated assaults, still kept on the alert; the horsemen sprang into their saddles and

pursued the enemy who launched their arrows and then fled in every direction ; but only to repeat the same annoyances the moment the troopers returned to the camp.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Fierce struggle with the natives at the passage of a stream
—Arrival at the village of Apalachee.

1539. At daylight, the Spaniards continued their march, and came to a forest skirting a deep stream, which the enemy had obstructed with palisades and strong barriers. Some of the Spaniards having formerly surmounted these obstacles were enabled to advise the mode of attack. It was determined that the horsemen should dismount, being the best armed, and that thirty of them with shields, swords, and hatchets, should join the vanguard to destroy the barricades—that those who were lightly armed should mount the horses, which were of no use in this pass, and go with the baggage and serving-men in the centre, and that the other

twenty, who were well armed, should form a rear-guard. In this order they entered the forest.

The Indians, seeing that their enemies were few in number, and that they could not use their horses, charged with great impetuosity, expecting an easy conquest. The latter forced their way to the palisades, where the battle became obstinate, the Spaniards struggling to cut a road, and the Indians to defend it. While some of the soldiers kept the enemy at bay with their swords, others hacked with their hatches at the tendrils of wild vines which fastened the barriers. In this way they demolished them one by one, but at the expense of many grievous wounds. Alvaro Fernandez, the Portuguese, lost another horse, which was transfixcd with arrows.

At length, the Spaniards having fought their way across this perilous pass, travelled with less trouble over the plains, where the enemy dreading the horse, avoided them. But whenever there were any woods near the road, the Indians were sure to be in ambush. Issuing from the thickets they made their attacks, shouting, and repeating frequently these words :

“Where are you going, robbers? we have already killed your chief and all his warriors.”

In this manner, these one hundred and fifty Spaniards, skirmishing and fighting all day, arrived at sunset in Apalachee. They had to travel slowly, on account of the number of wounded, ten or twelve of whom afterwards died; one of these was Andres de Meneses.

As they drew nigh the village, they became exceedingly anxious. Perceiving neither man nor horse, nor any sign of life, they began to apprehend disaster. It was thought that the yells of the savages must have reached the village, and as their comrades came not to their assistance, they dreaded lest the boasts of the natives, that they had despatched De Soto and all his army, should prove true.

On their nearer approach, however, their anxiety was relieved by the sight of the Governor, who received them like an affectionate father. They were hailed, too, by their comrades, with shouts of joy, as men risen from the dead; for the Indians, had alarmed De Soto, by assuring him that they had all been slain:—a fate he thought too probable, when he considered that this little

band of a hundred and twenty men had to cut their way through a wilderness in arms, which he, with a force of eight hundred troops, had found such difficulty in passing.

Among the first to greet Pedro Calderon on his arrival at Apalachee, was Juan de Añasco. This cavalier had accomplished his voyage in the two brigantines without any accident, and arrived safely in the Bay of Aute on the 29th of December.* The Governor had calculated the probable time it would take Añasco to make his voyage and journey, and had taken precautions accordingly. For twelve days before his arrival, companies of horse and foot marched, and counter-marched, between the camp and the bay, so that while one body was advancing the other was returning. In this way they kept the road clear of the enemy, and when at the bay, placed their standards in the highest trees, that they might be readily descried from the sea.

Juan de Añasco saw them landed, confidently, and without molestation, and leaving his brigantines well manned in the bay, reached the camp under escort of the companies.

* Portuguese Relation. c. 12.

It was a great gratification for Añasco and Calderon to meet, and once more join the Governor and their companions in arms. Companionship in dangers, had attached them strongly to each other;—fortitude and valour, made them ready, when together, to brave the greatest perils. Thus happily united, in the midst of a hostile wilderness, this band of adventurous Spaniards passed their winter together in the village of Apalachee.

CHAPTER XXV.

The exploring expedition of Diego Maldonado—Strange adventures that befell the Spaniards while wintering in Apalachee.

1539. A few days after the arrival of Juan de Añasco, the Governor, summoned Diego Maldonado, and ordered him to proceed to the Bay of Aute, set sail with the brigantines, and explore the coast to the westward, taking note of all its rivers, bays and harbours.

Maldonado set sail as directed, and coasted along to the west for seventy leagues, when he discovered a fine harbour, called Achusi.*

* The present Bay of Pensacola. Vide Martin's Louisiana, v. 1. p. 10. The Portuguese narrator calls this port Ochuse, and says that Maldonado set out by land with a detachment of fifty foot soldiers, and marched

It was land-locked and completely sheltered from all winds, ample enough for a fleet to ride in, and its shores were so bold, that a vessel might anchor close to the land.

The natives invited him on shore with many offers of hospitality. Seeing he mistrusted them, they came without hesitation on board the brigantines, and traded with the Spaniards, bringing whatever they demanded. This friendly intercourse gave Maldonado opportunities to go about in his small boats to take soundings, and note all the advantages of the bay. The Cacique moved by the representations which his subjects brought of the brigantines, and relying on the good faith of the strangers, in a luckless hour ventured on board. The Spaniards, having made all the necessary observations, and being apprised of the rank of one of the visitors, hastily weighed anchor, thus requiting the hospitality of the simple-hearted natives, by treacherously carrying off their Cacique. In two months from the time of his departure, Maldonado was again at the camp.

De Soto was rejoiced at the accounts given of along the coast until he discovered the bay. We follow the Inca's account, which is adopted by Herrera and others.

the Bay of Achusi. It was the kind of seaport well calculated to facilitate his scheme of empire, being a convenient place for receiving reinforcements and supplies from Havana, necessary to the prosecution of his grand project of conquest and colonization. It being now the latter part of February, the Governor despatched Maldonado with the brigantines to Havana, to proclaim his success, and to return with those vessels, the caravel of Gomez Arias, and any other shipping he could purchase, freighted with clothing, weapons, and ammunition of all kinds. Gomez Arias was likewise to return with him, as De Soto had a great opinion of the latter's prudence and sagacity in council, and his hardihood, perseverance, and intrepidity in the field. They were to rendezvous in the Bay of Achusi in the following month of October, at which time De Soto proposed to meet them there, having in the interim, made a circuit through the interior of the country, to explore the surrounding provinces,* which he determined to do during the thaw.

The natives of Apalachee were a race of large

* Portuguese narrative, c. 12. Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 2. L. 2, c. 23.

stature, amazing vigour of arm and intrepidity of spirit, and seemed to delight in war. During the whole winter they kept up alarms day and night, never ceasing to employ stratagems and assaults; but the vigilance and promptness of the Governor, and his great skill in Indian warfare, foiled every effort of consequence. They never attempted to oppose any body of soldiers drawn up in squadron, but roved in bands about the forests to surprise foraging parties, or lurked among thickets to cut off stragglers from the camp.

If a small party repaired to the forest to cut wood, the sound of their axes would sometimes attract a host of foes, who, coming upon them by stealth, would surround and massacre them, break the chains of the prisoners who had accompanied them to carry away the wood, and bear off the scalps of the slain as trophies to decorate their bows. In this way they destroyed more than twenty soldiers, and rendered the vicinity of the village so dangerous, that the Spaniards rarely ventured any distance unless well armed and in strong parties. One day, however, Juan de Añasco and six other cavaliers, extended their ride into the adjacent fields. Not intending to venture far, they wore

no defensive armour, nor any weapons but their swords, except one of their number named Estevan Pegado, who had a helmet and lance.

While thus sauntering slowly forward, seeing in a vista of the wood, a male and female Indian, they spurred forward to make them prisoners. The female was so terrified at sight of the horses, that she stood like one petrified. The husband took her in his arms, ran with her to the woods, and thrusting her among the bushes, returned to where he left his bow and arrows and seizing them, boldly fronted his enemies.

The Spaniards, pleased with his spirit, determined to take him alive. Rushing upon him, therefore, before he had time to discharge an arrow, they threw him down, and crowded upon him to prevent his rising, while Estevan Pegado with his lance kept him to the ground. The harder he was pressed, the more furious he became. He writhed and struggled under the horses' feet, wounding them in the flanks and belly with the thrusts of his bow. At length, with a desperate effort, he sprang on his feet, grasped his bow in both hands, and gave Estevan Pegado such a blow across the forehead that the blood streamed down his face. "Plague on it,"

cried the Spaniard, "if we treat this savage thus daintily he will kill us all seven." So saying, he rose in his stirrups, thrust his lance through the Indian's breast, and pinned him to the earth.

In this affray all the horses were more or less wounded, and one of them afterwards died of its wounds. The cavaliers returned to the camp, wondering at the prowess of the savage, and not a little ashamed to confess that a single Indian had treated them so roughly.

At another time, a party of twenty horse and fifty foot sallied out on a foraging expedition to gather maize. After they had collected an ample supply, they placed themselves in ambush in a hamlet about a league from their quarters, in hopes of entrapping some of the natives. In the upper part of what appeared to be a temple, they placed a sentry, who after some time descried an Indian moving stealthily across the public square; casting furtive glances, as if he dreaded a concealed foe.

The sentinel giving the alarm, Diego de Soto nephew to the Governor, one of the best soldiers in the army, and an excellent horseman, spurred into the square to capture him. Diego Velasquez, Master of Horse to the Governor,

followed at a hand gallop, to aid De Soto in case of need.

The Indian, seeing them approach, trusted for safety to that fleetness of foot for which his countrymen were remarkable. Finding, however, that the horse gained upon him, he took refuge under a tree, as the natives were accustomed to do, when they had no lances to defend themselves from the horses. Here, fixing an arrow in his bow, he awaited the approach of his enemy. Diego de Soto galloped up to the tree, but not being able to ride under it, wheeled close beside it and made a thrust with his lance over his left arm at the Indian as he dashed by.* The latter evaded the blow, and drawing his arrow to the head, discharged it at the moment the horse was abreast of him. The shaft entered just between the girth and stirrup-leather; the wounded animal went stumbling forward fifteen or twenty paces and fell dead.

Diego Velasquez spurred to the relief of his comrade, and passing the tree, made a lunge with his lance as De Soto had done. The same event followed. The Indian dodged the lance, discharged another arrow just* behind the stirrup-leather, and sent the horse tumblin

to take its place beside its companion. The two cavaliers sprang upon their feet, and advanced upon the Indian lance in hand. The savage, however, contented himself with his good fortune, made off for the woods, just keeping an even pace before them, scoffing, making grimaces, and crying out, "Let us all fight on foot, and we shall then see who will prevail." With this taunt he took refuge among the thickets, leaving the cavaliers to mourn the loss of their gallant steeds.

Some few days after the misfortune of these two horsemen, Simon Rodriguez and Roque de Yelves, set out on horseback to gather some fruit that grew in a wood skirting the village. Not satisfied with plucking it from the lower branches, seated in their saddles, they climbed the tree to gather it from the topmost boughs, fancying it of better flavour. While thus employed, Roque de Yelves gave the alarm of Indians at hand, and throwing himself from the tree, ran to recover his horse; but an arrow, with a barb of flint, entered between his shoulders and came out at his breast; he fell forward and lay stretched upon the earth. Rodriguez was too much terrified to descend. They shot at him like a wild beast,

and he fell dead, pierced by three arrows. Scarcely had he touched the ground when they scalped him and bore off the trophy in triumph. The arrival of his comrades' saved the scalp of poor Roque de Yelves. He related the event in few words, and making confession, immediately expired. The horses of the slain Spaniards had fled towards the camp. Upon the thigh of one of them was perceived a drop of blood. He was taken to a farrier, who, seeing that the wound was no greater than that made by the puncture of a lancet, said there was nothing to cure. On the following morning the horse died. The Spaniards suspecting that he had been struck by an arrow, opened the body at the wound, and tracing it, found a shaft which had passed through the thigh and entrails, and lodged in the hollow of the breast. They were perfectly amazed at the result of the examination, for an arquebuse could scarcely have sent a ball so far.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Tidings of a gold region—The Spaniards break up their winter cantonment—A fatal encounter.

1540. THE Governor remained five months in winter quarters; and such was the fertility of the province of Apalachee, and the quantity of maize, beans, pumpkins and various other kinds of grain, pulse and vegetables, besides a variety of fruits, that there was no need of foraging more than a league and a half round the village to find food in abundance, though the force consisted of fifteen hundred persons, including Indians, and above three hundred horses.

During this time, De Soto endeavoured to collect information respecting the interior of the country, that he might regulate his march in the spring. In the course of the winter two Indian lads about sixteen years of age were

brought to him; they were natives of distant provinces, and had travelled with Indian traders. They offered to guide him to those provinces; and one in particular spoke of a remote district towards the east, called Cofachiqui, governed by a female Cacique, whose capital was extensive, and who received tribute from all her neighbours. The Spaniards showed him jewels of gold, pieces of silver, and rings set with pearls and precious stones; and endeavoured to ascertain if any such articles were to be found in Cofachiqui. He gave them no doubt vague and blundering replies, which they interpreted according to their wishes. Understanding him to say, that the chief traffic in that province, was in those yellow and white metals,* and that pearls were to be found there in abundance, it was determined, to march in search of Cofachiqui.

Accordingly, in the month of March 1540, Hernando de Soto broke up his winter cantonment, and proceeded to the northeast. Being

* The Portuguese historian asserts that the lad described the manner in which the gold was dug, melted and refined with such accuracy, that those who were experienced in mining, declared he must have witnessed the process.

apprised that he must travel many leagues through an unpeopled wilderness, the Governor ordered his men to provide themselves with provisions. The Indians they had captured and made slaves, being exposed naked, and in irons, to the severe cold, had nearly all perished, so that each soldier was obliged to carry his own supply of provisions. On the evening of the third day, after a toilsome march, they arrived at a small village called Capachiqui.* It was situated on high ground on a kind of peninsula, being nearly surrounded by a marsh more than a hundred paces broad, and traversed in various directions by wooden bridges. The village commanded an extensive view over a beautiful valley, sprinkled with small hamlets. Here the troops remained quartered for three days.

About noon on the second day, five halberdiers of the General's guard, sallied from the village, accompanied by two other soldiers, Francisco de Aguilar and Andres Moreno. The latter was a gay, good-humoured fellow, and from frequently using the exclamation,—Angels! was nick-named by his comrades, Angel Moreno.

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 13.

These boon companions without orders from their superiors, went forth, in a heedless manner, merely to amuse themselves, and survey the neighbouring hamlets. The five guards were armed with their halberts, Aguilar with his sword and shield, Moreno with a sword and lance. They crossed the morass, and a strip of thicket about twenty paces wide, beyond which was an open country with corn-fields.

Scarcely had they advanced two hundred paces, when the ever-watchful savages sprang upon them from their lurking places. The startling war-cries and shouts of both parties, roused the soldiers in the village. They did not stay to cross by the bridges, but dashed through the swamp where the water was up to their breasts, and rushed on to rescue their companions. It was too late; the Indians had disappeared; and the five halberdiers lay stretched lifeless upon the ground, each pierced with ten or twelve arrows. Moreno was yet alive, but transfixed with a shaft barbed with flint, and the moment it was extracted from his breast, he expired. Aguilar, who was a hardy soldier, more robust than his companions, had defended himself stoutly; he was alive, though

badly wounded and much battered about the head. The Indians, having exhausted all their arrows, had attacked him with their bows. With such might did they wield them, that Aguilar's shield was shivered in pieces, and his skull laid bare.

As his comrades bore him to the camp, they inquired the number of the enemy, which he declared to be more than fifty, giving the reason why his party had been so suddenly defeated. One day having nearly recovered from his wounds, his comrades began to jeer him, asking him whether he had counted the blows he received, and if they had hurt much. "I counted not the number of the blows," replied Aguilar somewhat crustily, "but you may, one day or other, receive the like, and then you will know whether they hurt or not." Being further bantered on the subject, he broke forth in testimony of the valour and generosity of the Indian warriors. "You must know," said he, "that a band of more than fifty savages sprang out of the thickets to attack us; the moment, however, they saw that we were but seven, and without our horses, seven warriors stepped forth and the rest retired to a distance. They began the attack, and as we had neither arque-

busses nor cross-bows, we were entirely at their mercy. Being more active and swift of foot than our men, they leaped around us like so many devils, with horrid laughter, shooting us like wild beasts, without our being able to close with them. My poor comrades fell one after the other, and the savages seeing me alone, all seven assailed me with their bows and battered me as you witnessed. I concealed this before, through a sense of shame; but so it really happened, and may it serve as a warning to you all, never to disobey orders and go forth in a like careless manner."

Aguilar has probably given to this event a somewhat romantic colouring; yet, such instances of magnanimity are said to have been common among the warriors of Apalachee. They had great confidence in their own courage, strength, and dexterity, considering themselves equal if not superior to the Spaniards, when equally armed, and when the latter were not mounted on their horses:—at such times they would often disdain to avail themselves of their superiority of numbers.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Reception of the Spaniards by the natives of Atapaha—
Their arrival at the province of Cofa, and what happened
there—Reception of the army by the Cacique—Prepara-
tions for penetrating to the province of Cofachiqui—
Some account of the Chieftain Patofa—The Indian boy
Pedro has a marvellous visitation.

1540. Quitting this village, within two days, the army crossed the frontier of Apalachee, and entered the province of Atapaha.* On entering a new province, it was the custom of the Governor to lead the way himself, and see every thing with his own eyes, rather than trust to the accounts of others. He accordingly chose forty horse and seventy foot, well armed, with shields, arquebusses and cross-bows, and penetrated the country in advance of his army. On

* The river Atapaha may derive its name from this ancient province.

the morning of the third day, they came in sight of the village of Achese. The Indians had fled to the forests, carrying with them their wives, children, and effects. The horsemen dashing into the village, made six prisoners, two of whom were warriors that had remained behind to remove the infirm.

These two warriors came into the presence of the Governor, with a fearless and lofty demeanour. "What seek you in our land?" said they, not waiting to be questioned, "Peace or war?" De Soto replied through his interpreter, Juan Ortiz, "We seek not war with any one, but our wish is, to cultivate peace and friendship. We are in search of a distant province, and all we ask is food during our journey." The warriors instantly offered to supply the wants of the army. They sent two of their companions to their Cacique to relate all they had heard and seen, and charged them to inform all the natives they should meet, that the Spaniards came as friends, and were to be received and aided accordingly. On the departure of the three messengers, De Soto ordered the Indians to be set at liberty, and treated as friends.

De Soto, being joined by his army, halted

three days in this village, and then resumed his march to the north-east, proceeding for ten days, along the banks of a river, skirted by groves of mulberry trees, and winding through luxuriantly fertile valleys.* The natives were peaceable and domestic in their habits, and never violated the peace which they formed with the Spaniards.

On the eleventh day the latter crossed the boundaries of Atapaha, and entered the province of Cofa,† having, according to custom, dispatched messengers in advance to the Cacique with offers of peace. This chieftain, in reply, sent a deputation of two thousand Indians to De Soto, with a present of rabbits, partridges, maize, and a great number of dogs. The latter were held in high esteem by the Spaniards; for next to their want of salt, the greatest cause of suf-

* Supposed to be the Flint river.

† We have followed the Portuguese Narrative here, as the Incá is evidently in error in making the Spaniards enter the Province of Achalaque (the country of the Cherokees) at so early a period. This tribe dwelt much further to the northward, on the skirts of the Apalachian Mountains, and was not seen by the Spaniards until a month afterwards. The Portuguese historian calls this province Ocute.

fering was the scarcity of meat. Game was abundant, and amply supplied the natives with food, for they were very skilful in using the bow and arrow, and equally expert at constructing various kinds of traps. The Spaniards, however, being constantly on the march, had no time for hunting; and, moreover, dared not quit their ranks for fear of falling into some ambush of the enemy.

The Cacique of Cofa received the Spaniards with a generous welcome, giving up his own mansion to the Governor, and providing quarters for the army. The province over which he ruled was fertile, and populous. The natives were peaceful, domestic in their habits, and extremely courteous. They treated the strangers with much kindness, and entertained them five days with great hospitality.

The Adelantado had brought with him, thus far, a piece of ordnance, but finding it exceedingly burthensome and of little use, he determined to leave it with the Cacique. That the natives might have some idea of its use, he ordered it to be loaded, and pointed at a large oak without the village. In two shots, the tree was laid prostrate, to the infinite amazement of the Cacique and his subjects.

De Soto told the Indians that he should leave this wonderful machine with them as a reward for their friendship and hospitality;—to be taken care of until he should return or send for it. The Cacique and his warriors were deeply impressed with this mark of confidence, and promised that it should be guarded with vigilant care.

On the sixth day, the army resumed their march in quest of the adjoining province of Cofaqui, whose Cacique was an elder brother of Cofa's, and much more powerful. Cofa and his warriors escorted the army during one day's march, and would have continued with them to the frontier, but the Governor would not give his assent. The Cacique, having taken an affectionate leave of the strangers, ordered some of his people to accompany them, and do all in their power to serve them. At the same time he directed a chief to go before, and warn his brother Cofaqui, of their approach, and beseech him to receive them kindly. The Adelantado continued his march through a pleasant and luxuriant country, fertilized by many rivers, and inhabited by a more docile and gentle race, than any he had yet seen. At the end of six days he bid adieu to the territory of Cofa*.

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 13.

The moment the Cacique Cofaqui received the message of his brother, he despatched four chieftains, with a train of Indians, to welcome the Spaniards to his dominions.

This message diffused joy throughout the whole army. They marched cheerfully forward, and soon came to the confines of Cofaqui, where they dismissed the subjects of Cofa. When the Cacique knew by his scouts that the christians were near, he went out to receive them with a retinue of warriors, richly decorated, carrying their bows and arrows in their hands, wearing lofty plumes upon their heads, and over their shoulders rich mantles of martin skin, finely dressed. Many kind words were exchanged; the Indians and Spaniards unsuspiciously mingling together, entered the village with joyous shouts. The Cacique conducted the Governor to his own house, and retired himself to a neighbouring hamlet.

Early the next morning Cofaqui came to visit De Soto. He freely imparted every information respecting his own territory, and spoke of a plentiful and populous province, called Cosa, which lay to the north-west*. As

* Portuguese Relation, c. 14.

to the province of Cofachiqui, he said it was contiguous to his dominions, but that a vast wilderness of seven days' journey intervened*. Should the Governor, however, persist in seeking it, he offered to send a band of his warriors to accompany him, and promised to furnish him with all necessary supplies for the journey. De Soto had fixed his mind too intently upon Cofachiqui to be diverted from his course, and signified his intention of continuing on. Scouts were accordingly sent out in every direction, to assemble the natives, and in four days the village was thronged with them. Four thousand warriors were selected to escort the Spaniards, and four thousand retainers to carry their supplies and clothing. The chief articles of provisions were, maize, dried plums, grapes, walnuts, and acorns; for the Indians had no domestic animals, and depended for flesh upon the produce of the chase.

The Spaniards, seeing themselves surrounded by such a multitude of natives, although assembled for their service, kept unremitting watch day and night, lest, under the guise of friendship, they should attempt

* Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 5. c. 4.

their destruction. But it soon appeared that these troops were destined for warfare in another quarter.

A few days before the time appointed for the departure of the Spaniards, the General and his officers being in the public square, the Cacique ordered his chief warrior to be called. "You well know," said he to him, "that a perpetual enmity has existed between our fathers and the Indians of Cofachiqui. That bitter hatred, you are aware, has not abated; the wrongs we have suffered from that vile tribe still rankles in our hearts, unrevenged! The present opportunity must not be lost.

"You, the leader of my warriors, must accompany this Chief, and under his protection, wreak vengeance on our enemies! I need say no more; I leave our cause and our honour in your hands!"

The Indian leader, whose name was Patofa, was of a graceful form and striking features. His expression was haughty and noble, showing dauntless courage for war, and gentleness and kindness in peace. His whole demeanour showed that the Cacique had not unwisely bestowed his trust. Throwing aside his mantle of skin, and seizing a broadsword, made of

palmwood, which a servant carried behind him, as a badge of his rank, he cut and thrust with it, as skilfully as a master of fence, much to the admiration of the Spaniards. After going through many singular evolutions, he stopped suddenly before the Cacique, and made a profound reverence. "I pledge my word," said he, "to fulfil your commands as far as may be in my power; and I promise, by the favour of these strangers, to revenge the insults, deaths, and losses, our fathers have sustained from the natives of Cofachiqui. My vengeance will be such, that the memory of past evils shall be wiped away for ever. My daring to re-appear in your presence, will be a token that your commands have been executed. For, should my hopes be denied, never again shall you behold me,—never again shall the sun shine upon me! If the enemy refuse me death, my own hand shall inflict it. I will execute upon myself the punishment which my cowardice or fortune may merit!"

The Cacique Cofaqui rose and embraced him. "I consider," he replied, "that what you have promised is as certain to be done as though it were already accomplished, I therefore reward you, as for services already rendered."

Saying this, he took from his shoulders a mantle of beautiful martin skins, and placed it with his own hand, upon the shoulders of Patofa. A present of a mantle or plume, or any other article of dress, was considered by the natives of that country as the greatest honour their* chief could confer upon them, more especially when presented in person*.

A singular event happened the night before the departure of the army. One of the two boys taken prisoner in the province of Apalachee, had guided them thus far. The other, whom they named Pedro, was now to conduct them to the dominions of Cofachiqui, where they expected to find gold, silver, and precious stones. About the mid-watch, this youth woke the soldiers with screams of murder, and cries for help. The alarm spread throughout the camp; the Spaniards dreaded some treachery from the Indians: the trumpets sounded to arms; all was tumult; the former buckled on their armour, seized their weapons, and prepared for action. When it was discovered that no enemy was at hand, an inquiry was made whence the alarm had proceeded.

* Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 3. c. 5.

The Indian boy Pedro, half dead, trembling with fear and terror, and foaming at the mouth like a maniac, when asked why he had called for help with such 'strange outcries, declared that a demon with a horrible visage, accompanied by frightful imps, had appeared to him, and forbidden him, under pain * of death, to guide the Spaniards to the land he had promised; at the same time dragging him out of his hut and beating him, until he was so bruised and weakened that he could not move. He added, that the demon seeing the christians approach, had vanished, together with his imps;—he knew, therefore, from this, that the devils feared the christians, and begged they would baptize him immediately, lest the demon should return and kill him."

The Spaniards were perplexed by this story, which seemed to be corroborated by the contusions and swellings on the boy's face and body. The priests, being called in, baptized him, and remained with him during this night and the following day, to confirm him in the faith.* As the boy proved to be an elaborate

* The Portuguese narrator says the gospel was read over him and he recovered.

liar on various occasions, the foregoing tale may be considered a marvel of his own invention. The Cacique accompanied the army two leagues on their march, when, charging Patofa anew, faithfully to serve the Spaniards, he took an affectionate leave and returned to his home.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The desertion of an Indian, and how he was punished—
The army lost in a trackless wilderness—Parties despatched in different directions to seek some outlet to this wilderness—Sufferings of the army for want of food—Success of Juan de Añasco's expedition.

1540. THE Spaniards marched, formed into squadrons, with a van and rear-guard. Patofa and his four thousand warriors marched in like order, the Indians who carried the provisions being in the centre; for the natives sought eagerly to rival the white men in everything relating to the art of war.

By night, they lodged separately, and as soon as the Indians who carried the provisions had delivered them to their allies, they went away and slept with their com-

panions. Both armies posted sentinels, and watched each other as though they had been enemies. The Spaniards were particularly vigilant; for, seeing the order and regularity observed by the Indians, they mistrusted them. The latter, however, were entirely free from any evil designs; on the contrary, they manifested a desire to please the strangers in every thing. The stationing of sentinels and the observance of other camp forms, were intended more to show that they were accustomed to war, than from any doubts of the Spaniards. These precautions were observed by both parties the whole time they were together. The second night of their march, they encamped on the borders of an extensive uninhabited tract, lying between the provinces of Cofaqui and Cofachiqui.

The country upon which they now entered, though deserted, was pleasantly diversified with easy hills, open forests, and numerous streams.

On the fourth day an Indian deserted, and took the direction for his home. Patofa immediately sent four young warriors in pursuit of him, with orders to bring him back manacled. These set off with the swiftness of deer, and soon returned with their prisoner. Patofa or-

dered him to be led to the banks of a small stream that flowed through the encampment. Here he was stripped and commanded to throw himself upon the ground and drink the streamlet dry. The culprit drank until he could contain no more, but the moment he raised his head from the water, five Indians who were placed over him, with clubs in their hands, belaboured him cruelly until he resumed his task. Some of his comrades hastened to the Governor, and implored him to intercede with Patofa, or the poor wretch would be compelled to drink until he died. The intercessions of the Governor prevailed; the prisoner was released, but was half dead with the quantity of water he had been forced to swallow.

In the course of their march through this unpeopled tract, they came to two rivers, a crow-bow shot broad, and so deep and rapid, that the infantry could not maintain their footing in crossing. They made, therefore, a kind of dam by placing their horses side by side across the stream, in order to break its fury, until the foot soldiers and Indians had forded it.

About noon on the seventh day, their march was arrested, and the whole army thrown into

confusion by the sudden termination of the broad road which they had followed thus far! They pursued many narrow winding paths leading into thick and tangled forests, but these paths, after being followed for a short distance, likewise entirely disappeared.

Their native allies were here quite as much at a loss, not one of them being able to point out the proper track. De Soto then ordered Patofa into his presence. "Why," said he to him, "have you, under the mask of friendship, led us into this wilderness, from whence we can discover no way of extricating ourselves? I will never believe, that among eight thousand Indians, there is not one to be found capable of showing us the way to Cofachiqui. It is not at all likely that you, who have maintained perpetual war with that tribe, should know nothing of the public road and secret paths leading from one village to another."

Patofa replied to this by assurances that neither he nor any of his followers had ever visited this district before. "The wars," said he, "which have been waged between the two provinces, have not been carried on by pitched battles, nor invasions of either party; but by skirmishes between small bands, who resort to

the streams and rivers we have crossed, to fish ; and also by combats between hunting parties ; as the 'wilderness we have traversed, is the hunting ground common to both nations. The natives of Cofachiqui are more powerful and have always worsted us in fight ; our people, therefore, were dispirited and dared not pass over their own frontiers. Do you suspect that I have led your army into these deserts that you may perish ? If so, demand what hostages you please. If my head will suffice, take it—if not, you may behead every Indian, as they will all obey my mandate even to death.'*

The frank and feeling manner in which these words were delivered, convinced the Governor of Patofa's truth. He then called to him Pedro, the Indian boy who had guided them thus far, with such a perfect knowledge of the country, that the previous evening, he had pointed out exactly where they would find the road on the following morning. De Soto threatened to throw him to the dogs for thus deceiving him. The poor boy, however, appeared to be really bewildered, and seemed to have suddenly lost all his former sagacity ; he said it was four or

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. 3. c. 6.

five years since he had travelled through the wilderness, and could not now tell where they were.

Resuming their march, they wandered through the glades and openings of the forests, and at sun-set were arrested by a wide, deep and unfordable river. This sight filled them with dismay. They had neither rafts nor canoes with which to cross the stream, nor food to keep them alive, while these should be constructed. Their provisions were consumed, as they had only brought supplies for seven days, which it had been computed they would take to traverse the desert. The road lost, without a guide, without food, before them a deep impassable river, behind them an uninhabitable wilderness, and on each side a trackless forest ;—their situation was indeed dreary and disheartening.

1540. The Governor leaving the army encamped in a grove of pine trees, took a guide and a detachment of horse and foot, and struck into the depths of the forest. He returned late in the evening, greatly perplexed, having penetrated five or six leagues into the wilderness, without discovering any signs that the country was inhabited.

Early the next morning, he called a council of his officers, to consider the critical situation of the army, and decide whether they should turn in another direction or retrace their steps. Their supplies of maize were exhausted; both horses and riders were way-worn, dispirited, and enfeebled for want of food, and it was extremely doubtful whether the troops would be able to reach a place of refreshment; moreover, the Indians taking advantage of their weakened condition, might assail them; so that their return would probably be in the face both of war and of famine. It was resolved, therefore, not to move their camp, until some road or outlet from this wilderness should be discovered. The Governor then despatched parties of troopers in every direction, to seek for habitations. These returned at night-fall, some leading their wearied horses by the bridle, others driving them before them, having discovered neither road nor human dwelling.* De Soto then ordered four bands of horse and two of foot to start, two up the course of the river, and two down it; one party keeping along the bank, and the other a league inland, in hopes

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 14.

that one or the other would find a road or an inhabited place. He directed each of the captains to return in five days.

Captain Juan de Añasco, commanding one of the detachments, was accompanied by Patofa, and the Indian boy Pedro; the former being unwilling to remain in the camp, and the latter abashed at having lost the track, thought that by going on this expedition he might succeed in redeeming his character. With each company of Spaniards went a thousand Indian warriors who scattered themselves about the forests in search of a road.

The Governor awaited their return on the river bank, where he and his troops suffered great distress for want of food; having little to eat except the tendrils of wild vines, which they found in the woods. The four thousand Indians who remained with him sallied out every morning and returned at night, some with herbs and roots that were eatable, some with fish, and others with birds and small animals which they had killed with their bows and arrows. All these they brought to the army; although they were exhausted and almost famished themselves, yet such was their fidelity

and respect, that they tasted nothing until they had first presented the fruits of their chase to the Spaniards. The hardy soldiers were touched by this generosity of spirit, and gave them the greater part of the food they brought. These supplies, however, were by no means sufficient for the subsistence of such a multitude.

During three days the army suffered extreme privations. The Governor finding they could no longer endure this excess of hunger, ordered some of the hogs brought for the breed to be killed, and half a pound of meat was portioned out to each Spaniard. This, however, rather served to augment than allay the hunger of half famished men; yet notwithstanding their pressing wants, they generously divided their pittance with the poor savages, whose necessities were equally great.

De Soto fared precisely the same as his men; and though anxious for the fate of his great expedition, he wore a sunny countenance in order to cheer his followers. These chivalrous spirits appreciated his kindness, and to solace him, concealed their sufferings, assumed an air of contentedness, and appeared as happy as

though they had been revelling in abundance.

Meanwhile, the four captains who went in search of a road, suffered no less from hunger than the Governor and his army. Juan de Añasco having travelled three days along the river, came to a small village on its banks.* Here he found few natives, but a great supply of food; in one house alone were deposited five hundred measures of meal, formed from toasted maize, besides a considerable quantity of grain. The joy both of Indians and Spaniards may easily be imagined. After having searched the houses, they ascended to the roof of the highest, from which they could see that further on, the country was studded with villages and hamlets, surrounded by extensive corn-fields. When they had subdued the cravings of hunger, shortly after midnight they despatched four horsemen to the Governor with tidings of their success. These took with them many ears of corn, and horns of the buffalo or bison. The sight of these latter perplexed the Spaniards, who conjectured them to be the horns of tame cattle. Several

* The Portuguese Narrator says, the Indians called this hamlet Aymay;—the Spaniards gave it the name of the “Village of Good relief.”

times in the course of their expedition, they had found fresh beef, and importuned the Indians to tell them where they kept their herds, but not being able to obtain any satisfactory information on the subject, it was naturally conjectured that they purposely concealed the truth.

This night, Patofa and his warriors stole stealthily out of the camp so as not to alarm the Spaniards, sacked and pillaged the temple, massacred every Indian they found within the village and its neighbourhood, sparing neither sex nor age, and taking their scalps as trophies to show their Cacique, Cofaqui; for it was afterwards discovered that this village was in the long wished for province of Cofachiqui.

On the following day at noon, Añasco set forward to meet the Governor, not daring to await his arrival in the village, fearing a general assault from the natives, in revenge of the massacre of Patofa.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The half famished army revived by the tidings of Añasco's discovery of an abundant region—The ravages committed by Patofa and his warriors—De Soto's reception by the beautiful Princess of Cofachiqui.

1540. THE four horsemen who* had been sent as messengers, proceeded on at a rapid pace, and reached the army in one day ; having performed a distance of twelve leagues, which they had previously spent three days in travelling. The news they brought diffused new life among the troops, rendering them as wild with joy as if they had been rescued from the jaws of death. When morning dawned, De Soto ordered the four troopers to lead the way to the village they had discovered. Before he decamped, however, he buried a letter at the root of a tree, upon

the bark of which he inscribed the following words: "Dig at the root of this pine, and you will find a letter." This was to make known to the other Captains, who were seeking a road, the direction the army had taken.*

The idea of a plentiful supply of food, so revived the half famished troops that they spurred their horses through the forest, each striving to pass the other, and before noon on the following day they were all within the village. Here the Governor determined to halt for some days, that his men might recruit after their late privations and fatigue, and likewise await the arrival of the three Captains, who had been sent in search of a path.

These three Captains, had the good fortune to find the letter of their comrades, and in the course of four days rejoined the main body with their different detachments almost famished: having, during more than a week's absence, had nothing to eat but a scanty supply of roots and herbs.

De Soto remained seven days in this frontier village of the province of Cofachiqui; during this time Patofa and his warriors were not idle,

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 14.

but sallying forth stealthily, ravaged the country for leagues round, slaying and scalping man, woman, and child, sacking and pillaging villages and hamlets, temples and sepulchres, and refraining only from setting fire to them, through fear that the flames might betray their actions to the Spaniards.

When De Soto heard of this cruel ravage, he made all haste to get rid of his sanguinary allies. Sending for Patofa, he thanked him for his friendly conduct and valuable escort; and loading him with presents of knives, trinkets, and clothing for himself and his Cacique, dismissed him and his followers.

The savage warrior set off on his return, well pleased with the presents, but still more gratified at having fulfilled the vow of vengeance which he had made to his Chieftain.

Two days after the departure of Patofa, the Spaniards resumed their march along the banks of the river. They met with no living thing, but witnessed many dismal proofs of the dreadful carnage which Patofa had committed. For miles the ground was strewn with the scalpless corpses of the slain. The natives had fled into the interior. leav-

ing a plentiful supply of provisions in the villages.

On the afternoon of the third day, the army halted in a verdant region, covered with mulberry and other fruit trees, laden with fruit. The Governor unwilling to advance until he had ascertained what province he was in, ordered Juan de Añasco with thirty foot soldiers, to pursue the road which they had followed thus far, and endeavour to capture some Indians from whom they might obtain information, and who would serve as guides. In order to encourage Añasco, he declared that he sent him in preference to any other person, because he was always successful.

Añasco and his thirty comrades quitted the camp on foot before night-fall. They marched forward in profound silence, with the noiseless pace and watchful eye of a marauding party. As they advanced, the road became wider. They had proceeded nearly two leagues without seeing a living thing, when on the still night-breeze, was borne a low, murmuring sound, like the near hum of a village. As they moved forward, the sounds grew more distinct. At length emerging from the thick-

ets which had obstructed their view, they saw lights and heard the barking of dogs, the cries of children, together with the voices of men and women. Satisfied that a village was near, they advanced in silence to seize some Indians secretly in the suburbs, each striving to be first, in order that he might have the honour of being considered the most diligent. They were, however, disappointed in their hopes, the river which they had followed flowing between them and the village. Walking for some time on the opposite bank, at what appeared to be a landing place for canoes, after having supped, and reposed until two o'clock at night, they set off for the camp, and arriving a little before daybreak, related to the Governor what they had seen and heard.

When the day dawned, De Soto set out with a hundred infantry, and a hundred horse to reconnoitre the village. Having reached the opposite bank, Juan Ortiz and Pedro, the Indian boy, shouted to the natives to come over, and receive a message for their Cacique.

The Indians, terrified at the strange sight of the Spaniards and their horses, ran back to the village to report what they had seen. In

a little while a large canoe was launched, and bent her course directly across the river, managed by several rowers. Six Indians, of noble appearance and from forty to fifty years of age landed from it.

The Governor, perceiving they were persons of consequence, received them with much ceremony, seated in a kind of chair of state, which he always carried with him for occasions of this kind. As the Indians advanced, they made three profound reverences, one to the sun, with their faces eastward, the second to the moon turning westward, and the third to the Governor. They then asked him the usual question, "whether he came for peace or war?" He replied, "Peace; and a free passage through your lands." He moreover requested provisions for his people, and canoes or rafts to assist him and his army in passing the river.

The messengers answered that their supplies were small, the country having been ravaged by pestilence during the preceding year;—that most of the people had therefore abandoned their houses and villages, and taken refuge in the woods, neglecting to sow their corn, adding that they were governed by a young female, just of marriageable age, who had recently

inherited the sovereignty. To her they engaged to return and repeat the circumstances of their interview, assuring the Spaniards they made no doubt, that from her discreet and generous nature, she would do every thing in her power to serve them. With these words they departed.

The Indians had not long returned to the village, when the Spaniards perceived movements of preparation, and observed a kind of litter borne by four men to the water's side. From this alighted the female Cacique, and entered a highly decorated canoe, which had been prepared for her reception. A kind of aquatic procession was then formed; a grand canoe, containing the six ambassadors, and paddled by a large number of natives, led the van, towing after it the state bark of the Princess, who reclined on cushions in the stern, under a canopy supported by a lance. She was accompanied by eight female attendants. A number of canoes filled with warriors closed the procession.*

* The account of this Princess and her territory, is taken from the Spanish and Portuguese account. The former is by far the most ample and circumstantial; though, it evidently magnifies the importance both of the Princess and her dominions.

The young Princess stepped on shore, and as she approached the Spaniards, they were struck with her appearance. She was finely formed, possessing great beauty of countenance, and exhibiting considerable grace and dignity. Having made her obeisance to the Governor, she took her seat on a kind of stool placed by her attendants, and entered into conversation with him ; all her subjects preserving a most respectful silence.

Her conversation confirmed the previous reports of the ambassadors. Her province had been ravaged by pestilence, during the preceding year, and provisions were very scarce. She offered, however, to share with the strangers a quantity of maize which had been collected for the relief of her village, and to put them in the way of getting similar supplies from other villages. She offered, likewise, her own house for the Governor's accommodation, and half of the village for that of his officers and principal soldiers ; undertaking that wigwams of bark and branches should be put up for the rest. She added, that rafts and canoes should be provided for the army to cross the river on the following day. De Soto being extremely gratified by her generosity, endeavoured in the best

manner he could, to express his sense of her kind and hospitable offers, assuring her of the constant friendship of his sovereign and himself. The cavaliers, too, listening with admiring attention to her discourse, and the answers she gave to various inquiries concerning her province, were as much charmed with her intelligence and judgment as they had been with her beauty. They were surprised to find such natural dignity, grace, and true politeness in a savage brought up in a wilderness.

While the Princess of Cofachiqui was conversing with the Governor, she was slowly disengaging a string of large pearls, which passed three times round her neck, and descended to her waist. The conference ended, she requested Juan Ortiz, the interpreter, to present the necklace to the General. Ortiz replied, that the gift would be more valuable if presented with her own hand. This she scrupled to do from a dread of infringing the decorum, which women, especially sovereigns, ought never to violate. When De Soto was apprised of her scruples, he directed Ortiz to tell her, that he should more highly prize the favour of receiving the gift from her own hand, than he would value the jewel itself, and that she would commit no breach

of decorum, as they were persons unknown to each other, treating of peace and amity.*

This being interpreted to the Princess, she arose, and placed the string of pearls about the neck of De Soto;† he likewise stood up; and taking from his finger a ring of gold, set with a fine ruby, presented it to her, as a token of friendship. She received it very respectfully and placed it upon one of her fingers. This ceremony ended, she returned to her capital, leaving the Spaniards much struck with her native talent, and personal beauty.‡

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 14. Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 3, c. 11.

† According to the Portuguese Narrator, the Indians in this interview assured the Spaniards that their province was but two days journey from the sea coast; but, subsequent circumstances gave reason to believe, either that the information was incorrect in itself, or erroneously rendered by the interpreters.

‡ Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 2, L. 2, c. 27.

CHAPTER XXX.

The army quartered in the village of the young Princess—
Añasco despatched after a certain rich widow—Some
account of the young warrior by whom he was guided
—The melancholy fate of the Indian guide—Añasco
makes another attempt to capture the old Princess.

1540. ON the following day, the Indians having constructed large rafts, and brought a number of canoes, the christian army crossed the river. The passage was not, however, effected without accident. Several of the horses, urged by their riders into the stream, were carried by the current amid quicksands and whirlpools, and four of them unfortunately drowned. Their loss was as much lamented by the Spaniards, as though they had been brothers in arms.

When the army had all crossed, they were

lodged in wigwams, under the shade of luxuriant mulberry trees, with which the province abounded. Around the village were scattered many forsaken wigwams; the rank grass growing within, as if they had long been untenanted—a token that the pestilence had, indeed, passed over them.

The province of Cofachiqui, as well as the neighbouring provinces of Cofaqui, and Cofa, are represented as being extremely populous and fertile. The natives were of a tawny complexion; well formed; frank, gentle and sincere in their dispositions, and less warlike than any of the tribes among which the Spaniards had sojourned.

They were at war, however, with their neighbours, and had many captives among them, whom they employed in cultivating the fields and in other servile labours. To prevent the escape of these captives, they were maimed by having the sinews of the leg cut above the heel or the instep.

In the course of his various enquiries about the affairs of the province, De Soto learnt that the mother of the Princess, a widow, was still living, at a retired place about twelve leagues down the river. He felt a strong desire to see

her, wishing thoroughly to secure the friendship of the people; but his desire was probably quickened by learning that the queen-mother had in her possession, a large quantity of pearls.

On making known his wishes to the Princess, she immediately despatched twelve of her principal subjects to her mother, to entreat the latter to come and behold the wonderful strangers, and the extraordinary animals they had brought with them.

The queen-mother, however, refused to accompany the messengers, and expressed herself scandalized at what she termed the levity of her daughter, in so readily holding intercourse with persons whom she had never before seen. She rebuked the envoys for having permitted such a departure from her proper dignity; and manifested in various ways the vexation which stately dowagers are somewhat prone to indulge in similar cases.

The Governor hearing this, summoned Juan de Añasco, who was the very man for undertakings of this kind, ordered him to assemble thirty companions, depart for the retreat of this coy widow, and by fair but gentle means prevail upon her to come to the encampment.

Juan de Añasco and his comrades set off at once, on foot, although the morning was already somewhat advanced. They were guided by a youthful warrior, whom the Princess had commanded to accompany them. This youth was a near relative to the widow, and had been reared by her, and being kind and noble in his nature, she was as dear to him as though he were her own son. For this reason her daughter had chosen him to go with the Spaniards, and had instructed him to proceed in advance of them when they approached the residence of her mother, in order to secure for them a favourable reception.

He shewed his generous blood in countenance and bearing. He was about twenty-one years of age; with handsome features, a vigorous and graceful form. His head was decorated with lofty plumes of different coloured feathers; he wore a mantle of dressed deer-skin; in his hand he bore a beautiful bow, so highly varnished as to appear as if finely enamelled, and at his shoulder hung a quiver full of arrows. With a light and elastic step, an animated and gallant air, his whole appearance was that of an ambassador, worthy of the young and beautiful Princess whom he served.

Juan de Añasco and his comrades having proceeded nearly three leagues, as the heat was oppressive, stopped to make their mid-day meal and take their repose beneath the shade of some widely spreading trees. The Indian guide had proved a cheerful and joyous companion, entertaining them all the way with accounts of the surrounding country and the adjacent provinces. On a sudden, after they had halted, he became moody and thoughtful, and leaning his cheek upon his hand, fell into a reverie, uttering repeated and deep drawn sighs. The Spaniards noticed his dejection, but fearing to increase it, forbore to ask the cause.

After a while, he quietly took off his quiver, and placing it before him, drew out the arrows slowly, one by one. They were admirable for the skill and elegance with which they were formed. The shafts were reeds. Some were tipped with buck's horn, wrought with four corners like a diamond; some were pointed with the bones of fishes, curiously fashioned; others, had barbs of the palm and other hard woods; and some were three pronged. They were feathered in a triangular manner, to render their flight more accurate.

The Spaniards could not sufficiently admire

their beauty; they took them up, and passed them from hand to hand, examining and praising the workmanship and extolling the skill of their owner. The youthful Indian continued thoughtfully emptying his quiver, until, almost the last, he drew forth an arrow with a point of flint, long and sharp, and shaped like a dagger; then, casting round a glance, and seeing the Spaniards engaged in admiring his shafts, he suddenly plunged the weapon into his throat, and fell dead upon the spot.

Shocked at the circumstance, and grieved at not having been able to prevent it, the Spaniards called to their native attendants, and demanded the reason of this melancholy act, in one who had just before been so joyous.

The Indians broke into loud lamentations over the corpse; for the youth was tenderly beloved by them, and they knew the grief his untimely fate would cause to both Princesses. They could only account for his self-destruction by supposing him perplexed and afflicted about his embassy. He knew that his errand would be disagreeable to the mother, and apprehended that the plan of the Spaniards was to carry her off. He alone was acquainted with the place of her concealment, and it appeared to his generous

mind an unworthy return for her love and confidence to betray her to strangers. On the other hand he was aware that, should he disobey the mandates of his young mistress, he should lose her favour and fall into disgrace. Either of these alternatives would be worse than death; he had chosen the latter, therefore, as the lesser evil, and as leaving a proof to his mistresses of his loyalty and devotion.

Such was the conjecture of the natives, to which the Spaniards were inclined to give faith. Grieving at the death of the high-minded youth, they mournfully resumed their journey.

They now, however, found themselves at a loss respecting the road. None of the Indians knew in what part of the country the widow was concealed, the young guide who had killed himself being alone master of the secret. For the rest of that day and until the following noon, they made a fruitless search, taking some of the natives prisoners, who all professed utter ignorance on the subject. Juan de Añasco, being a fleshy man and somewhat choleric, was almost in a fever with vexation, which was encreased by the weight of his armour, and the heat of the day; he was obliged, however, to give up his quest after the widow, and

return to the camp much mortified at having for once failed in an enterprize.

Three days after his return, an Indian offered to guide the Spaniards by water, to the retreat of the Princess. Añasco accordingly set out a second time with twenty companions, in two canoes; but at the end of six days returned with no better success. The old Princess having heard of the search made after her, had taken refuge in the depths of a forest which they found it impossible to penetrate. The Governor, therefore, gave up all further attempt to obtain an interview with this wary and discreet matron.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The disappointment of the Spaniards at not finding gold—
The treasure they find—They discover some European
relics.

1540. While Juan de Añasco was employed in his search after the widow, the Governor endeavoured to inform himself respecting the riches of the province. For this purpose he summoned the two Indian lads, who had formerly accompanied traders into this part of the country ; they told him that their masters had trafficked here for yellow and white metal, similar to the gold and silver shewn by the Spaniards, and also for pearls. He made these youths describe the articles to the Princess, and begged her, if such yellow and white metals existed in her territories, to order that specimens should be immediately brought to him.

The Princess cheerfully complied, and in a

little while several Indians appeared, laden with the supposed treasure. To the great disappointment of the Spaniards, however, the yellow métal proved to be a species of copper of a yellowish tint much resembling gold ; and the white metal, though a shining substance, having somewhat the appearance of silver, was extremely light, and crumbled in the hand like dry earth. Some have supposed it was a species of quartz, but it is probable that it was mica. Thus of a sudden vanished the golden treasures of Co-fachiqui.

To console the Spaniards under their evident disappointment, the Princess pointed out a kind of temple or mausoleum at one end of the village, informing them that it was the sepulchre of all the chieftains and eminent warriors of the place, and adorned with great quantities of pearls. She further assured them that at another village called Talomeco, about a league distant, the ancient capital of her territory, was a larger mausoleum, in which all her ancestors were interred. There still greater quantities of pearls were deposited, all which she assured the Governor should be entirely at his disposal.

De Soto was in some degree consoled

for his disappointment in not finding gold, by the assurance of these immense hoards of pearls ; though many of his followers did not give up their hopes of eventual success, insisting that there were veins of that precious metal in the copper and brass of the country. They were destitute, however, of aquafortis, or touchstones to assay them.

Juan de Añasco, the Contador, or royal accountant of the expedition, being absent, the Governor deferred visiting the temple until he should be present in his official capacity. In the mean time, he placed trusty persons round the edifice to keep watch by day and night.

As soon as Añasco returned, the Governor visited the mausoleum at Talomeco, accompanied by the officers of the royal revenue, and a number of his principal officers and soldiers. It was a hundred paces in length and forty in breadth, being covered with a lofty roof of reed. At the entrance to this temple were gigantic statues of wood carved with considerable skill, the largest being twelve feet high. They were armed with various weapons and stood in threatening attitudes, having grim and ferocious countenances. The interior of the temple was likewise

decorated with statues of various shapes and sizes, and with a great profusion of conches, and different kinds of sea and river shells.

Around the sepulchre were benches on which were wooden chests skilfully wrought, but without locks or hinges. These contained the bodies of the departed Caciques and chieftains of Cofachiqui, left to the natural process of decay;—for these edifices were merely used as charnel houses. Besides the chests, there were baskets wrought of cane, filled with furs and Indian robes of dressed skins, and mantles made of the inner rind and bark of trees, and others of a species of grass, which, when beaten, resembled flax. There were some formed with feathers of various colours worn by the natives during winter. But above all, the baskets contained pearls of every size, and in incredible quantities, together with figures of children and birds entirely composed of them. The Portuguese historian says they obtained fourteen bushels of these gems, and that the female Cacique assured them, that, if they searched the neighbouring villages, they might find enough to load all the horses of the army. Nor is the Inca less extravagant in his account. All this, however, must

be taken with a large deduction for those exaggerations with which the riches of the new world were always described by its discoverers, when beyond the reach of proof.

The Intendants of the revenue would have made general spoil of these precious articles had not De Soto interfered. He represented that they were at present merely discovering the country, not dividing it, and having to make their way through a vast wilderness, it would not do to burthen themselves with treasure. They should, therefore, only take specimens of these riches to send to Havana, and leave every thing in the temples in their present state until they came to colonize, when all should be properly divided, and a fifth of the amount set apart for the crown. He, however, distributed handfuls of large pearls among his officers, exhorting them to make rosaries of them; and permitted the officers of the crown to retain a considerable quantity which they had already weighed out.

Annexed to the principal sepulchre were several buildings, which served as armories, containing weapons of various kinds, all arranged in great order. The whole establishment was maintained

with exact care and evidently under the charge of numerous attendants.

While ransacking these depositories of arms, to their astonishment, the Spaniards found a dagger and several coats of mail. Nothing could equal their surprise at meeting with these European reliques in the heart of this unknown wilderness. They questioned the Indians on the subject, who informed them that many years before a number of white men, like themselves, had landed at a seaport, about two days' journey from thence;—that the commander of the party dying soon after he had landed, factions and brawls immediately took place among his followers for the command, in which several were slain;—that the survivors having reassembled on board their vessel, put to sea and quitted the country.*

* We found in the town a dagger and some coats of mail; whereupon the *Indians* told us that many years before, the Christians had landed in a port, two days' journey from thence, (this was certainly *Ayllan*, who undertook the conquest of *Florida*,) that the Governor died upon his landing, which had occasioned great factions, divisions, and slaughter among the chief gentlemen who had followed him, every one aspiring to the supreme

The Spaniards pondered over these facts and concluded that the white men in question must have been the unfortunate Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón, and his ill-fated followers; and those who were experienced in maritime affairs gave it as their opinion, that, from the course of the river which passed from Cofachiqui, it must be the same which on the sea coast was called St. Helena.*

Elated with the riches they had found, the Spaniards besought the Governor to fix a colony there, urging that as the country was fertile, they might establish a lucrative pearl fishery, and carry on a trade with Spain from the seaport at the mouth of the river.

De Soto persisted, however, in his original plan of making an exploring tour, and of meeting Maldonado at the port of Achusi, according to appointment. He observed that the surround-

command; so that at length they left the port, and returned to *Spain*, without discovering the country.—Portuguese narrative c. 14. London, 1686.

* El río caudaloso, que pasava por Cofachiqui, decian los hombres Marineros, que entre estos Espanoles iban, que era el que en la costa, llamavan de Santa Elena, no porque lo supiesen de cierto, sino que, segun su yiaje, les parecia que era el. Garcilaso de la Vega Lib. 3, c. 18.

ing country would not afford provisions for a month,—that it would always be open for them to return to in case they should find none richer, and that, in the mean time, the Indians would sow their land with maize in greater plenty.

After a long stay, therefore, in this fertile and opulent province, De Soto prepared for his departure. During the time he remained here, several broils took place between his people and the natives. These had originated in the ill conduct of some of the low and base minded of the soldiery;—probably in their rapacious eagerness for gain. They had produced a general ill-will among the natives toward themselves and their countrymen generally, as well as a change in the feelings of the young Princess; who, instead of evincing her usual kindness, grew cold in her conduct, and appeared to eye the Spaniards with great distrust. De Soto remarked this change, and received private intelligence, that she was about to fly and leave him without guides, for his march, or porters to convey the baggage of his army. As his route would lie through various tracts of country under the dominion of this female Cacique, any

hostility on her part, or that of her subjects could not but prove extremely embarrassing. He, therefore, determined to adopt a precaution, which he had more than once practised in the course of his expedition, and which the Spaniards had found so efficacious in their Mexican and Peruvian conquests ; this was to secure the Sovereign's person by way of ensuring the peaceful conduct of her people.

Accordingly, he placed a guard round the Princess, and signified to her, that she was to accompany him in his march ; but while he thus detained her as a hostage, he took care that she should be attended with the respect and ceremony due to her rank. The policy of this measure was apparent in the cessation of all brawls between Spaniards and Indians ; and in the good treatment which De Sotos' army experienced during its subsequent march through the territories of his royal captive.

NOTE.

In detailing the march of the Spaniards, in search of Cofachiqui, we have as usual, availed ourselves both of the Spanish and Portuguese narratives, reconciling them as far as possible, and exercising our own judgment where they

vary from each other. Nothing is more perplexing than to define the route in conformity with modern landmarks. The discovery of the coats of mail and dagger, the reliques of the unfortunate Ayllon and his comrades, throws an unexpected light upon one part of the route, and shows that the province of Cofachiqui was at no very great distance from the sea coast of Georgia, or South Carolina ; though it could not have been within two days journey, as the Portuguese narrator intimates. The armour and weapons of Ayllon and his followers, had probably been divided among the savages, and carried as trophies into the interior. The river which passed by Cofachiqui, and which the Spaniards supposed to be the St. Helena, has been variously conjectured to be the Ocone, the Ogeeghee and the Savannah. As to the vast quantities of pearls found in the temples, and said to abound in the villages, they surpass belief ; yet, both the Spanish and Portuguese writers are very positive and circumstantial in their account of them.

END OF VOL. I.

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